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AN

INQUIRY

Into the Real and Imaginary

OBSTRUCTIONS

TO THE

ACQUISITION of the ARTS

IN

ENGLAND.

BY JAMES BARRY,

Royal Academician, and Member of the Clementine Academy of Bologna.

Navigia, atque Agri culturas, Mœnia, Leges,
Arma, Vias, Veſteis, & cætera de genere horum,
Premia, delicias quoque vitæ ſunditus omneis,
Carmina, Picturas, & dædala ſigna polire,
Uſus, & impigræ ſimul Experientia mentis
Paullatim docuit pedetentim progredientes.
Sic unum quicquid paullatim protrahit ætas
In medium, ratioque in luminis eruit oras.
Namque aliud ex alio clareſcere corde videmus
Artibus, ad ſummum donec venêre cacumen.

LUCRETIUS, lib. v.

LONDON,

Printed for T. BECKET, Corner of the Adelphi, Strand.

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TO THE

KING.

I Humbly beg leave to lay at Your MAJESTY's Feet the following Inquiry into the Cauſes that have retarded the Advancement of the Polite Arts amongſt Your MAJESTY's People.

From Your Patronage and Example, theſe Arts have already acquired a ſtrength and vigour hitherto unknown in this Country; and it is from the ſame moſt gracious Source they are to receive that Perfection

which will give a Luſtre to our Age, and be the Admiration of future times.

I am,

May it pleaſe Your MAJESTY,

Your MAJESTY's

Moſt dutiful Servant,

And moſt faithful Subject,

Nov. 10, 1774.

JAMES BARRY.

PREFACE.

THE inquiry, which is the ſubject of the following pages, is in its nature curious, and perhaps of ſome importance to the reputation of this country: it could not be ſucceſsfully purſued without a conſiderable ſhare of knowledge and experience in the arts; it even required an artiſt, and ſuch an artiſt as was enabled, from the nature and extent of his ſtudies, to take a view of the whole, or at leaſt of the great eſſentials of his profeſſion; how far I may fill this character is not for me to determine. I will vouch for nothing but the integrity and candour of my intentions; grounded

upon theſe, and upon a preſumption that reaſonable men look for nothing farther than mere information in the writings of artiſts, I have ventured to publiſh my thoughts upon matters immediately belonging to the theory and practice of my own profeſſion, or intimately connected with it. If theſe thoughts are found weighty and to the purpoſe, and if I am ſufficiently clear and intelligible in my manner of expreſſing them, it is all that I have been ſolicitous about, and all that the reader has a right to expect.

There is indeed one particular in which I muſt beg ſome little indulgence. There are ſome *abuſes* freely handled. If this ſhould give uneaſineſs to any ſet of men, with whoſe intereſts or paſſions it may happen to jar, I am really ſorry for it, and can aſſure them that it was not meant for offence, but for inveſtigation, and

was

was unavoidably neceſſary, as nothing could have been made of the ſubject I had undertaken but by fairly bringing every thing into the light, and availing myſelf of the advantage of an honeſt and free diſcuſſion.

CONTENTS.

CHAP. I.

OPINIONS touching the Capacity of the Engliſh for the Polite Arts. page 1

CHAP. II.

The Hiſtory of the Arts furniſh the beſt View of the Cauſes of their Riſe and Perfection. 9

CHAP. III.

The Riſe and Perfection of the Arts in Italy, has been owing to a proper Combination of Moral Cauſes. 18

CHAP. IV.

The different Styles of Art in the different Schools, not owing to Climate, but to moral or accidental Cauſes. 44

CHAP.

CONTENTS.

CHAP. V.

The Introduction of ſuperior Art into England prevented by the accidental Change of Religion. 64

CHAP. VI.

Abuſes under the miſtaken Notion of introducing the Arts. 73

CHAP. VII.

That the ſuperior Style of the Grecian and Italian Art is not owing to any natural Superiority in the bodily Structure of thoſe People. 79

CHAP. VIII.

That the Engliſh Imagination and Judgment are capable of the greateſt Exertions, exemplified in their Poets. 107

CHAP. IX.

The Diſadvantage to ſuperior Art in England, in not having been taken up whilſt the Nation was forming its Character, 121

CHAP.

CONTENTS.

CHAP. X.

The Diſadvantage to the ſmaller Branches in being diſjoined from the great Stock of Hiſtorical Art. 129

CHAP. XI.

Of the Public Encouragement. 144

CHAP. XII.

Some Errors in the preſent State of Connoiſſeurſhip. 149

CHAP. XIII.

Temperate Climates the peculiar Theatre of moral Influence, 159

CHAP. XIV.

On national Taſte, Character, and Manners, and their Changes in temperate Climates. 164

CHAP. XV.

The Changes in the Taſte and Character of the Italians not to be accounted for by the ſuppoſed Changes of Climate. 168

CHAP.

CONTENTS.

CHAP. XVI.

The Error of the Notion about the Influence of Climates exemplified by an Analyſis of the different Styles of Art. 175

CHAP. XVII.

The State of Education furniſhes the Solution of all thoſe Difficulties which many Writers have found ſo perplexing. 196

CHAP. XVIII.

The ſame Subject continued. 199

CHAP. XIX.

Some Obſervations on Religion, ſo far as it is connected with the mental Powers. 214

CHAP. XX.

The Concluſion. 221

AN

INQUIRY, &c.

CHAP. I.

Opinions touching the Capacity of the Engliſh for the Polite Arts.

ALTHOUGH it would be difficult to prove that the philoſophical inveſtigations of modern writers have afforded no new light towards the further perfecting what are called the Fine Arts and Belles Lettres, yet I believe it is pretty generally known, that philoſophy, as it has been treated by ſome men, has at times ſet up falſe lights, and that many ſhallow and ill-grounded opinions have been uſhered into the world under the ſanction of this ſpecious title.

Some men, wrapt up in the knowledge of a few particular ſciences, have made uſe of this knowledge as a rule to meaſure the depths of other ſciences, and of arts in which they are unſtudied and unpractiſed; and they have dignified their reveries with the name of Philoſophy; whilſt others, ſtruck with the folly and incertitude of ſuch a method, have conducted themſelves in another manner, and by gently ſliding over the ſurfaces of all the ſciences and the arts, like travellers riding poſt through a great country, they venture to diſcuſs the moſt minute particulars; no receſs is too internal and concealed for their deciſion. One or other of theſe being in a greater or leſſer degree the caſe of many writers, and indeed (every thing conſidered) of moſt men, it ought not to be wondered at, if the profeſſors of particular arts do ſometimes find themſelves reduced to the neceſſity of combating received errors, and

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entangled in controverſies with miſapprehenſion, ignorance, or petulance.

There are many people who ſeem to have perſuaded themſelves, and are deſirous of perſuading others, that the arts of painting, ſculpture, and architecture, are naturally and inevitably confined to particular ages; and further, that they are, like plants, only the growth of certain ſoils and climates. If all that they have advanced upon this head be admitted as true and deciſive, it muſt be acknowledged that the people of the Britiſh dominions are labouring in the arts to little purpoſe, and they muſt in the end find themſelves diſappointed in their aims, and that they had been endeavouring to do what the order of nature and the ſituation of their climate had pre-determined they ſhould not do. Opinions of this kind make no diſagreeable figure in works of imagination; we often find a playful and beautiful uſe made of them by poets, ancient as well

as modern. See Virgil*, Milton†, Addiſon‡, &c. but as they might be converted to a ſort of weapon in the hands of national prejudice, they will be occaſionally and pertinently adopted; and they have been virulently applied in plain, cool proſe, with no inconſiderable amplification.

Abbé du Bos, preſident Monteſquieu, and Abbé Wincleman, have followed one another in aſſigning limits to the genius of the Engliſh; they pretend to point out a certain character of heavineſs and want of fancy, which they deduce from phyſical cauſes. They have either wilfully taken advantage of, or they have been ignorantly deceived by, certain impediments which happened accidentally to prevent or retard us in keeping pace with other nations, in an acquiſition of ſome of the fine arts: becauſe we have

* Eneid, book vi.

† Paradiſe Loſt, book ix. ver. 44.

‡ Letter from Italy.

not

not hitherto done it, they chuſe to find out that the thing is impoſſible to us; and that we are eternally incapacitated by the clouds that hang over our heads, the nervous ſyſtem of our bodies, our ſoil, our food. They ſay that we can have no imagination, taſte, or ſenſibility: that * we are cold and unfeeling to the powers of muſic: that † we can ſucceed in nothing that requires genius; that if ever we are worth admiring, it is for the hand and execution of the workman, and not for the deſign of the artiſt: that ‡ our climate is ſo diſtempered, that we diſreliſh every thing, nay even life itſelf; that we are naturally and conſtitutionally addicted to ſuicide; that it is a conſequence of the filtration of our nervous juices; that ‖ it is in conſequence of

* Spirit of Laws, chap. ii. book 14.
† Abbé du Bos, part ii. chap. 13.
‡ Spirit of Laws, chap. xii. book 14.
‖ Du Bos, part ii. chap. 14.

a north-eaſt wind, that our * poets cannot arrive at that particular kind of delicacy that ſprings from taſte; that they cannot arrive at any true imagery; that they ſtrike the ear with a great noiſe, and preſent nothing to the mind; and that our natural capacity for the fine arts, amounts to very little, to nothing at all †.

Such is the picture that, in the writings of theſe philoſophiſing men, is ſhewn about as the exact portrait of the genius of our iſlands. Had it been exhibited by a quack or mountebank, there would have been nothing ſurpriſing in it; we might be inclined to laugh at the impoſition, and its want of reſemblance: but coming as it does from ſuch reſpectable names as the Abbé du Bos, and the preſident Monteſquieu, we muſt be more ſerious; they have a very deſerved repu-

* Spirit of Laws, book xix. chap. 27.

† Hiſt. de l'Art par Abbé Wincleman, p. 48.

tation

tation in ſome branches of real knowledge; and even Abbé Wincleman had undoubtedly a very extenſive reading. It is indeed a humiliating conſideration, that learning, inſtead of contributing to make us think and judge more wiſely, does often but furniſh us with materials for errors and abſurdities that are below the reaſonings and concluſions of common illiterate people: but let us not blame learning for that which may be more juſtly aſcribed to the miſuſe of it; theſe writers before us were men of too much enterprize; they imprudently ventured upon difficulties, the ſolution of which happened to lie out of their way. The nature and extent of their enquiries did not qualify them to enter minutely into the number of little ſucceſſional ſtudies and reſearches, upon which the growth and the ſpecies of arts depend; being, therefore, unequal to the taſk of following the natural order of this enquiry, they have (perhaps purpoſely) wandered into philoſophical and metaphyſical ſubtleties,

which are calculated rather to perplex the ſubject, and plauſibly to conceal the writer's ignorance, than to elucidate and to ſatisfy the mind of the reader. It is then no wonder, if their out-of-the-way ſyſtems and diſcourſes ſhould ſometimes meet with the ſame noted cenſure that Hannibal paſſed upon a famous orator, upon almoſt a ſimilar occaſion: Cicero, in chap. xviii. confer. 2. of his Orator, tells us, that when Hannibal was in his exile at Epheſus, he was perſuaded to go to hear Phormio, the Peripatetic, diſcourſe upon the duties of a general, and upon the whole ſyſtem of military affairs, which he did for ſeveral hours with great fluency. The reſt of the audience, who ſeemed to be quite raviſhed, aſked Hannibal what he thought of the philoſopher; the Carthaginian general (who did not perhaps ſpeak good Greek, though he ſpoke good ſenſe) ſaid that he had occaſionally ſeen many fooliſh people, but that a greater dotard than that ſame Phormio he had never met with before.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

The Hiſtory of the Arts furniſh the beſt View of the Cauſes of their Riſe and Perfection.

IT may ſeem that ſuch opinions, and the diſtorted methods of reaſoning that produce them, being ſo little calculated to prove and to convince, the refutation of them will be proportionably unentertaining and uſeleſs. But no: I flatter myſelf that the diſcuſſion of this matter will lead to conſiderations of a weightier nature; and by developing the accidental cauſes that have hitherto retarded our progreſs in the arts, we might, beſides making our apology with foreigners, hope to be alſo an occaſion of ſome future advantage to our own people. In the courſe of this work, I hope to make it evident, that the obſtructions that have hitherto lain in the way of

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our acquiring art, were not naturally connected with our climate, but aroſe from mere accident, the fluctuation of opinions, and of thoſe things that depend upon opinions; and conſequently, that although theſe difficulties might lie before us at one time, they might poſſibly be removed at another. I ſhall therefore in the firſt place endeavour to give a plain account of the riſe, and the manner in which the arts grew up in thoſe countries where they flouriſhed; which, as we go on, will furniſh us with ſuch a view of things, that we ſhall be at no loſs for juſt and palpable reaſons why the arts have been, or have not been, attended with ſucceſs in the countries in queſtion.

The monuments of good art in old Rome, are well known to have been, with very few exceptions, all of them either brought from Greece, or executed at Rome by Greeks; ſo that notwithſtanding a native Roman had now and then

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appeared in the arts, yet from the taking of Syracuſe, by Marcellus (which was 212 years before Chriſt, and at which time the taſte for the fine arts was introduced) through the flouriſhing time of the Roman commonwealth, and through the whole race of the emperors, to the taking of Rome by Alaric the Goth, 410 years after Chriſt, the Romans themſelves in all that time never made any efforts in the arts, that did honour to their genius; and if there be any force in the objections raiſed to the natives of England, they lie with equal juſtice againſt the natives, and conſequently the climate, of Italy in its moſt flouriſhing times.

The arts were much fallen at Rome in the time of Conſtantine, as appears from many monuments ſtill remaining; they fell yet lower in Valentinian's time, and they were reduced to a ſtate of the the utmoſt barbariſm and nothingneſs by the time of Charlemagne. Any body inclined to look further into the ſtate of

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the arts in thoſe times of their declenſion, may conſult the ſarcophagi, &c. referred to in the books publiſhed under the title of Roma Sotteranea. Giorgio Vaſari, in the proem to his Lives of the Painters, obſerves, that in the times of the declenſion of the arts, "Painting "and ſculpture (as they were arts more "for delight than ſervice) were in a "worſe ſtate, and declined faſter than "architecture; that architecture, as a "more neceſſary art, continued, but "without taſte or beauty." He obſerves, that in the time of Theodoric, the architecture in Italy was of that manner called Gothic; more rich and large than well underſtood, and of ſo deformed and bad a ſtyle, that it ſerves more as an object for modern ridicule than praiſe: he obſerves alſo, that the church of the Apoſtles, built at Florence in the year 805, was tolerably well conducted, and not of ſo bad a manner as the works executed before it; and he fixes upon this

this as a ſort of epoch from which he dates the riſe of architecture. In the church of S. Miniate, rebuilt 200 years after this of the Apoſtles, architecture had received many improvements, and and appeared to be riſing with ſome vigour. About the ſame time at Piſa, Lucca, and other little republics of Italy, the arts began to ſhake off their barbariſm; although from the way that Vaſari juſtly deſcribes the works of the other Greek artiſts before the time of Cimabue, who lived in 1270, we may allow them to merit nearly the ſame commendations as the ſculptors who wrought thoſe monuments to be found in our Gothic churches of England and France. During all this time, between Cimabue and Theodoric, which includes a ſpace of 700 years, we may conſider the Italians as in the ſame ſtate of barbariſm and ignorance, in the arts of painting and ſculpture, as the people of England and France; ſo that here we

have a period in which thoſe nations are at par, and from this point we ſhall glance our eyes along the progreſs of each.

Cimabue, the painter, Nicolas Piſano, the ſculptor, and Andrea Taffi, who wrought in Moſaic, were the ſcholars of Greeks; and Arnolfo, the architect, was the diſciple of an Oltromontane (a German): theſe were amongſt the firſt Italians who applied themſelves to the arts; and from their time we have had a ſucceſſion of Italian artiſts down to the preſent age. I had, with a good deal of pains, made ſome eſſays at drawing up a ſhort account of the riſe of the arts in Italy; of the time and labour that was laid out in making the neceſſary diſcories which unfolded themſelves by ſlow degrees, the leaſt of which diſcovery, however eaſy it might be to us at preſent, required the whole life and painful application of ſome active ingenious artiſt to be ſacrificed to it, before it was obtained;

tained; the many experiments and long practice neceſſary to aſcertain the juſt quantity and degree of each of thoſe particulars, that in the maſs make up a work of art; and the linking together all theſe matters afterwards, was labour for a great number of cotemporary artiſts, and for ſucceſſions and generations of them. The happy period of this aggregate of diſcoveries being at laſt arrived, its luſtre immediately diſtinguiſhes the men who were coeval with it (in reality they were nothing more), and Da Vinci, M. Angelo, Rafaelle, Titian, Correggio, Parmeggiano, and Annibal, are looked upon as extraordinary geniuſes, whoſe talents came down to them from heaven; * whilſt the men, the time, and the labour that really built up this fabric of perfection, came naturally to be forgotten, and buried in

* Abbé du Bos's ſyſtem obliges him to lay down a falſe ſtate of facts, in order to make out a ſpontaneous production of perfection. See vol. ii. p. 128, and 406.

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obſcurity. But as there is much of the works of the old artiſts deſtroyed by time, and more by the renovations that have been made, I found what I had done was too imperfect to lay before the public. I ſhall therefore here inſert a part of Vaſari's proem, which is exceedingly full to our purpoſe, and has every thing to recommend it, as he was himſelf a conſiderable artiſt, and wrote in a time when arts and learning were in their vigour in Italy, and when much was to be ſeen that does not exiſt now. Being a Tuſcan, he had the beſt opportunities of knowing thoroughly what had been done by the moſt diſtinguiſhed artiſts of every age, as almoſt all of them who contributed to the advancement of the arts, until the time of Mantegna, were Tuſcans alſo. Beſides, Vaſari was intimately acquainted with the judgments and criticiſms of the greateſt artiſts and literati of that time, and undertook his noble work at their deſire, and

with their aſſiſtance; ſo that although ſome few ineſſential particulars regarding the domeſtic hiſtory of ſome artiſts might be diſputed with him, yet this cannot affect the merit of his judgment upon their works, in which he could be more certain. The length of the following quotation from him will, it is hoped, be ſufficiently atoned for by the very curious matter it contains.

CHAP. III.

The Riſe and Perfection of the Arts in Italy, has been owing to a proper Combination of Moral Cauſes.

"NOT to ſearch too minutely, I will conſider the riſe of arts in a general way, and ſpeak rather of the capacity of the times, than of the perſons. I will divide the progreſs of art, from the time of its reſurrection to the times in which we live, into three parts or ages. In the firſt and moſt ancient examples, thoſe three arts are found to be very diſtant from their perfection; and when they have had ſomething of good, it has been accompanied with ſo much imperfection as certainly not to merit too much praiſe; yet for having given a beginning, a way, and a method to improve upon, for thoſe who followed, if there was no other reaſon, it is a ſufficient

cient one for us to ſpeak well of them. In the ſecond age, we ſee manifeſtly that things were meliorated conſiderably, in the invention, in the conducting of them with more deſign, with a better manner, and more fidelity; and by throwing away the ruſty, ill-formed, diſproportioned, manner of the old works: but it would be raſhneſs to ſay, that any one was to be found in this time perfect in all parts, or who had wrought up any thing to the excellence we ſee at preſent, either in invention, deſign, or colouring. Certainly this praiſe belongs to the third age, in which I believe it might be ſaid with truth, that art has done all that an imitatrix of nature is allowed to do; and it has roſe ſo high, that there is more reaſon to fear its falling down, than there is to hope that it can ever be carried farther.

" Conſidering thoſe things attentively, I have judged that it is the property and particular nature of theſe arts, that, from a low beginning, they advance

by little and little, by which finally they arrive at the top of perfection; and this I am made to believe, by ſeeing that it is the ſame thing in other faculties, there being amongſt all the liberal arts a certain relation, which is no ſmall argument of the truth of this. In the painting and ſculpture of former times, the ſame thing has ſo happened, that if we but change the names, it is identically the ſame caſe: becauſe there we ſee (if we believe thoſe who lived near thoſe times, and who could ſee and judge of the works of the ancients) that the ſtatues of Canaco were of a manner very hard, without life or motion, and exceedingly diſtant from the truth; and thoſe of Calamide the ſame, though ſomewhat of a ſofter manner. After comes Miron, who, though not an exact imitator of the truth of nature, yet has given to his works much proportion and grace, ſo that we might reaſonably beſtow commendation on what he did.

Poli-

Policletus ſucceeds in the third age, and the others ſo much celebrated, which, as it is ſaid, and as we might believe, made their works entirely perfect.

" This ſame progreſs muſt have fallen out in painting alſo, becauſe they aſſert it, and from the nature of things it muſt have been ſo. In the works of thoſe who painted only with one colour, and were thence called Monocromati, there was to be found no great perfection. After, in the works of Zeuxis, Polignotus, Timanthes, &c. who only worked with four colours, they are praiſed for the features, the contours, and the forms; and without doubt, in theſe alſo there was ſomething to be deſired. But afterwards, in Erion, Nicomaco, Protogenes, and Apelles, every thing was perfect and fine, and better was not to be imagined. But paſſing over this, where we are obliged to refer to others, let us come to our own times, where we have our eyes

a much better judge and guide than our ears.

" It is not clearly ſeen, how much architecture was improved by Buſchetto the Greek, by Arnolfo the German, and by Giotto, ſeeing in the buildings of this time, the pilaſters, the columns, the baſe, the capital, the cornice, and all the members are deformed; and, except the ſmall matter of good which remains of antique fragments, there is no one thing that has order or good workmanſhip: but theſe men notwithſtanding mended matters much, and made no ſmall acquiſition to the art, becauſe they reduced it to better proportions, and made their buildings not only firm and ſtrong, but alſo in ſome parts ornamented, though the ornaments were confuſed and very imperfect. In the columns, they did not obſerve that meaſure and proportion which the art required; nor diſtinguiſh the orders, whether they were

Doric,

Doric, Corinthian, Ionic, or Tuſcan; but mixed them by a rule of their own, which was againſt all rule, making them very groſs or very ſlender, as it beſt anſwered their purpoſe; and the invention and plan was partly of their own brains, and partly taken from the antiquities they had ſeen: notwithſtanding all this, whoever compares their works with the works of their predeceſſors, will ſee every thing much mended.

"The ſame I ſay of ſculpture, which in the firſt age after its reſurrection, had much of what was good, becauſe it avoided the ſtupid modern Greek manner, which was ſo ignorant and unformed, that there was more of the unwrought block to be ſeen in it, than of the ſkill of the artiſt; their ſtatues being without fold in the drapery, and without attitude or motion. After Giotto had improved deſigning, thoſe who wrought in marble grew better alſo; as Andrea Piſano, Nino, his ſon, and other diſci-

ples, they had more action and better attitude. One ſees then, that at this time ſculpture was meliorating a little; they gave ſomething of a better form to the figure; a better manner of folds to the drapery; ſome heads with a better air; ſome attitudes not ſo ſtiff; and, in fine, they began to have a feeling of the good manner. But they were wanting in an infinity of things, by reaſon of the imperfect ſtate of deſigning in thoſe times, as they had to find out the way for themſelves, and few helps before them; but a beginning, though little, is yet deſerving of much praiſe.

"Painting, by reaſon of the devotion of the people, was more in uſe, had a greater number of artiſts employed in it, and by this means made a more evident progreſs than the other two arts of ſculpture and architecture. Cimabue beginning, and Giotto carrying it on, the modern Greek manner was laid aſide, and there aroſe a new one, which I call the

the manner of Giotto, becauſe found out by him and his diſciples, and was univerſally revered and imitated by all. One ſees in this, that the profile which formerly reigned throughout the figure, was taken away, as was the ghaſtly ſtaring eyes, and the feet upright, reſting on the point of the toes, the ſharp hands like wedges, the being without ſhadow, and other deformities of thoſe Greeks. Giotto gave a good grace to his heads, a ſoftneſs to his colouring, and better attitudes to his figures; he ſhewed ſome beginning towards giving a life to his heads, and more natural folds to his draperies; he diſcovered in part ſomething of the diminution and foreſhortening of figures: beſides this, he gave a beginning to the paſſions and affections of the ſoul; ſo that one partly ſees fear, hope, anger, and love; and if he did not give to his eyes all the fine movements of life, with the fineſſes of their humidity, or give ſoftneſs to his

hair

hair and beard, or to his hands the knitting of their joints and muſcles, or make his naked reſemble nature, we muſt excuſe the difficulties of the art, and the little helps he had from thoſe who went before him; though his judgment was not perfect, yet it was good. The ſame we might ſay of others, as of Taddeo Gaddi in colouring, who is more mellow, has more force, is better in his carnations, in the colouring of his draperies, and has more ſtrength and life in his figures. In Simon Saneſe, one ſees that he obſerved the decorum in compoſing of his ſtory. Stephen Scimmia, and his ſon Thomas, brought great improvement and perfection to deſign, and perſpective, and ſoftneſs, and union to colouring, yet ſtill retaining the manner of Giotto; the ſame we may ſay of Spinello Aretino, Parri his ſon, James Caſentino, Antonio Veneziano, Lippo, Starnini, and others, who worked after Giotto, following his air, deſign, colouring,

ing, and manner, though improving upon him in ſome little degree. Thus we ſee in this period, the arts, as it were, but ſketched out, and exceedingly wanting of the perfection they were ſuſceptible of.

"In the ſecond age one finds every thing grown infinitely better; the invention more copious, richer of ornaments, and the deſign more ſolid, more natural and reſembling life, a fineſſe in working, and though wanting in point of practice, yet there was thought and diligence; the manner more graceful, the colours more beautiful, ſo that there remained but little to reduce every thing to perfection. Firſt by the ſtudy and diligence of the great Fillipo Bruneleſchi, architecture received the meaſure and proportions of the antique, both in the columns and ſquare pilaſters; he diſtinguiſhed order from order, and ſhewed their differences; every thing was regulated by rule; he gave force and depth to deſign, he gave to every thing a good grace, and made known

known the excellence of the art: he found the beauty and variety of capitals and cornices; the ground-plans of his churches and other edifices are well underſtood, and his fabricks are ornamented with proportions and magnificence, as we ſee in the ſtupendous machine of S. Maria del Fiore, &c. which we can certainly ſay were fine and good, though there be wanting the fineſſes and exquiſite grace, which architecture afterwards received in the third age.

"In painting and ſculpture alſo we have excellent things done by the maſters of this ſecond age: the ſculptors mended very much, went exceedingly beyond their predeceſſors of the firſt age, and left but little to be done by thoſe of the third who came after them. They had a manner much more graceful, more natural, better ordered, of more deſign and proportion; their ſtatues began to reſemble living perſons, and were no longer mere ſtatues like the firſt. The figures of Jacopo

copo della Quercia Saneſe, have more life, more grace, more deſign, more eaſe; thoſe of Fillipo Brunelleſchi, more underſtanding of the muſcles, better proportions, and more judgment; the ſame may be ſaid of their diſciples. But Lorenzo Ghiberti has done more; he has ſhewn in the gates of S. Giovanni invention, order, manner, and deſign, ſo as that his figures ſeem to move and have a ſoul. Donatelli is ſo very excellent that I can hardly reſolve whether to put him in this ſecond or in the third age; he has united all thoſe perfections that were ſcattered in the others.

" The ſame advancement we find in the painters of this ſecond age, in which the moſt excellent Maſſaccio removed entirely the manner of Giotto, in the heads, in the drapery, in the backgrounds, in the naked, in colouring, in perſpective; ſo that he renewed every thing, and brought into light that modern manner, which from that time down

down to this day, has been followed by all our artiſts, who from time to time (as we ſee in the life of each) have enriched and adorned it. One ſees a new manner of colouring, of foreſhortening, of natural attitudes, the emotions of the ſoul and the geſtures of the body much more expreſſive; a ſtudy to make deſign approach nearer the truth of natural things, and the air of the face which ſo entirely reſembles nature that it may be known for whom they were done. In this manner, endeavouring to imitate what they ſaw in nature, their works became ſolid and well underſtood; it gave them a hardineſs to make uſe of perſpective, and to foreſhorten properly according to the natural relievo and true form, obſerving the ſhadow and the light, and the other difficult things, the compoſition of the ſtory, the attempting to make the landſcape more like the truth, the trees, the herbs, the air, the clouds, and the other objects of na-

ture, inſomuch that one may boldly ſay, that theſe arts were not only raiſed up, but were alſo brought into the flower of their youth, ſo as to give hopes of thoſe fruits, which came after, in a ſhort time, to their perfect age.

" Undoubtedly architecture, painting, and ſculpture, were greatly advanced by thoſe excellent maſters of the ſecond age; they added to what they received from their predeceſſors, rule, order, meaſure, deſign; and if they did not entirely perfect matters, they brought them, however, ſo near the truth, that the third age might eaſily, by the means of this light, raiſe it up and carry it to that ultimate perfection which has made the modern things more prizable and celebrated.

" To ſhew the qualities of this ultimate improvement, and how they acquired that true beautiful which has made the moderns ſo glorious, we ſhall obſerve, that the rules of architecture were eſtabliſhed upon the meaſures of the antique, the

the plans of ancient edifices were followed in the making of modern ones; they divided, in an orderly manner, each genus from the other, giving to every body its proper limbs; they no longer mixed and confounded together the Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, and Tuſcan, and this method they obſerved univerſally, as well in ſculpture and painting as in architecture, keeping up a proper relation between the parts and the whole together: their deſign was to imitate the beauties of nature, and from frequently employing themſelves upon whatever was fineſt, in hands, heads, bodies, legs, &c. and from the putting all this properly together, reſulted that combined beauty which we call the fine manner. Theſe things were not done by Giotto and the firſt artiſts, who only diſcovered the beginning of thoſe difficulties, and touched upon the ſurface, of them: but the ſecond augmented greatly thoſe arts, though they did not entirely carry them to perfection."

There

There was yet wanting, in their rule, a licence, which, though not ariſing from rule, is notwithſtanding waranted by it, and can be made uſe of without introducing confuſion or deſtroying order; which licence requires a copious invention in every thing, and a certain beauty running through even the ſmalleſt parts, ſhewing order in all, but with more ornament. Their figures were wanting in a certain grandeur and grace which is not given by meaſure. Deſign was not conducted to its ultimate delicacy; though they ſucceeded in giving roundneſs to the arm, and ſtraightneſs to the leg, yet there was not that eaſy grace in the ſearching out of the muſcles, and that ſweetneſs which appears between the things ſeen and not ſeen, as is ſhewn in fleſh and life: but they were hard and flayed, diſpleaſing to the eye, and harſh in the manner; they wanted a lightneſs to make the figures graceful, free, and eaſy; chiefly in women and children, to whom they gave

members too maſculine; they wanted that plumpneſs and fleſhineſs given by the artifices of deſign and judgment, without being bloated up and formleſs. They wanted alſo that diverſity of fine habits, a gracefulneſs in their colouring, variety in their back ground, landſcape, &c.

" Andrew Verrochio, Antonio del Polaiuolo, and many other moderns, began to make their figures more ſtudied, with more deſign and a more exact reſemblance of nature, notwithſtanding all was not done as yet, by ſtudying the fine and going after the antiques; they ſaw wanting certain delicacies and an extreme perfection in the feet, hands, &c. They were to acquire thoſe ſubtile delicacies in which conſiſts the perfection and flower of the art; that firmneſs, lightneſs, and ſweet exalted grace which they had not, and which is the greateſt effort of diligence, and is what gives the laſt finiſh to art in a fine figure, either of painting or ſculpture. This fineſſe, delicacy, and

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certain ſomething which they wanted, they could not ſpeedily put in practice; becauſe in their manner of terminating their work, ſtudy and labour but made it drier and harder: however, thoſe who came after them ſoon found it, upon ſeeing dug up certain antique ſtatues, which were the Laocoon, the Hercules, the Torſo of the Belvedere, the Venus, the Cleopatra, and others, which, for their ſweetneſs and exact fleſhineſs, taken from the greateſt beauties of life, with attitudes which not only writhe and twiſt, but alſo, in certain parts, actually moving, and with the utmoſt conceivable gracefulneſs. Theſe were the occaſion of laying aſide the dry manner, hard and cutting which remained in art, from the ſuperfluous ſtudies of Pietro della Franceſca, Lazzaro Vaſari, Aleſſo Baldovinetti, Andrea del Caſtagno, Peſello, Hercole Ferrareſe, Gio. Bellini, Coſimo Roſſelli, l'Abbate di San Clemente, Domenico del Ghirlandaio, Sandro Botticello, Andrea Mantegna,

Fillippo, and Luca Signorello, who, over-ſtraining themſelves, endeavoured by fatigue to do the impoſſible things of art, particularly in foreſhortenings and unpleaſing views, which were as diſagreable to the ſight as they were hard in the execution: and although, for the moſt part, they might be well deſigned and without error, yet there was wanting in them that eaſy promptneſs which was here never ſeen, and a ſweetneſs and union of colours which Francia Bologneſe and Pietro Perugino began to uſe in their works: all the world ran mad after this new manner of painting, more full of life and beauty than the former, abſolutely believing that it was impoſſible ever to do better. But their error was demonſtrated clearly by the works of Lionardo da Vinci, who was the perſon that gave a beginning to the third manner, which we will call the modern: beſides ſtrength and manlineſs of deſign, he gave to his works all that ſubtle detail of the exactneſs

exactneſs of nature, with ſound rules, better order, true meaſure, a deſign that was perfect, and a moſt divine grace; in truth, he gave to his figures life and reſpiration. Followed after him, though very diſtant, Giorgione da Caſtel Franco, who gave to his pictures a vaſt force, relievo, and life, by a certain obſcurity of ſhadowing well underſtood. Not inferior to his is the friar Bartolomeo of S. Mark's, who gave to his pictures force, relievo, ſweetneſs, and grace of colouring. But above all, the moſt graceful Rafaello da Urbino, ſtudying the labours of the old and the new maſters, he took from all what was beſt, and amaſſed ſuch a ſtore as enriched the art of painting, and brought it to as entire a perfection as it had anciently in the pictures of Apelles and Zeuxis, and I believe to a greater, had we their works to compare with his. Nature reſts conquered by his colours, and invention is in him ſo full of facility, that, for what we are able to imagine,

his ſtories are the ſame as the written ones, &c. In this manner, but more ſweet in his colouring and not ſo firm, followed Andrea del Sarto, whom we can much commend as his pictures are free from error. We cannot explain the life and vivacity which Antonio Corregio gave to his works, with his looſe hair, not done in the laboured method in uſe before him, which was difficult, cutting, and dry; but it is of a delicate ſoftneſs, and the hairs are executed by the very facility of making them, they ſeem gold and more beautiful than nature, which is conquered by his colours. The ſame did Franceſco Mazzuola Parmeggiano, who went beyond him in many parts of grace, ornament, and beautiful manner, as may be ſeen in many of his pictures with laughing faces and eyes full of vivacity, ſo that one ſees the beating of the pulſe or whatever it was agreeable to his pencil to execute. Whoever conſiders thoſe works painted on the fronts of houſes by

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Polidoro and Maturino, with ſo much practice and dexterity, &c. Alſo il Roſſo, Fra Sebaſtiano, Giulio Romano, Perin del Vaga, &c. but that which is of the moſt importance in this art is, that it is at this day reduced to ſuch perfection, and is ſo eaſy; for whoſoever poſſeſſes deſign, invention, and colouring, that whereas the firſt maſters made a picture in ſix years, the maſters of our days will make ſix in one year. But he that carries the palm from the living and the dead, and tranſcends and covers all that have gone before him, is the divine M. Angelo Buonarotti, who not only was principal in one of thoſe arts, but in the three together—with a foundation ſo firm, a grace ſo perfectly graceful, and a much greater perfection, conducted with a certain difficulty ſo eaſy in his manner, that it is impoſſible ever to behold better." Vaſari's proem.

This is the ſubſtance of what Vaſari ſays of the riſe of the arts in Italy; and

he has hinted, and we know from others, that it was in the very ſame manner, by a gradual and ſlow progreſs, that the ancient Greeks wrought themſelves up to ſuch an exalted perfection, that their works ſtand as the moſt glorious monuments of extenſive knowledge, grandeur of conception, beauty and graceful propriety, that ever were erected to the honour of the human capacity. When we look upon the remains of their works, and lay aſide all conſiderations of moral cauſes and gradual progreſs, it is no wonder if we can bring ourſelves to believe them the productions of a people tranſcending humanity. But after all, facts and experience will have their weight with us; and theſe ſhew, that neither were the Greeks above the want of that accidental happy concurrence of moral circumſtances and combinations, which muſt operate in other countries, before the poſſible extent of men's powers and attainments can diſplay itſelf. No,

quite

quite the contrary; behold the Greeks now, and for many ages paſt, buried in ruſt and ignorance; and amongſt the loweſt and moſt contemptible people of Europe, even whilſt their neighbours, the Italians, have been gathering laurels in every avenue of Parnaſſus. And further, the hiſtories that give an account of their beginning, ſhew that, like other people, they alſo were born in ignorance. We ſhall not now take any notice of the ſtate of the arts amongſt the Aſiatics and Egyptians, from whom the Greeks muſt undoubtedly have learned a great deal. It will be ſufficient for our purpoſe to run over the accounts which the ancients have given of the progreſſive manner in which theſe arts were perfected by the Greeks themſelves.

Here we find them beginning with an outline. They write down the names of their objects for fear of miſtake.—A Corinthian and his followers firſt attempt

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to fill up this outline with one colour.—An Athenian makes his men and women different the one from the other.—A Cleonian acquires the ability to draw his figures in different poſtures, diſtinguiſhing the joints and parts of the body, and making folds in the drapery.—Others come to have an idea of light and ſhadow.—They no longer uſe ſimple colours, but mix and compound them one with another.—Apolodorus is diſtinguiſhed for a judicious choice of nature. Zeuxis for good colouring. Parhaſius is firſt remarkable for ſymmetry and expreſſion. Pamphilus joins the ſtudy of mathematics to art. Pauſias excells at foreſhortening his figures. Euphranor introduces majeſty; and Apelles, grace.

Thus, notwithſtanding our informations about the hiſtory of the arts in Greece are more imperfect than we could wiſh, and are even, in ſome reſpects, partial and inconſiſtent, as they do not ſufficiently

ficiently acknowledge the great obligations of that people to their predeceſſors in the arts, the Egyptians and Aſiatics, yet in whatever way we take it, it was equally a work of progreſſive and accumulated experience.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

The different Styles of Art in the different Schools, not owing to Climate, but to moral or accidental Cauſes.

THE abettors of this notion about the influence of climates, not content with accounting in general for the capacity or incapacity of different people, are inclined ſtill further to make out, by the ſame induction, that the ſchools and ſocieties of artiſts were particularly qualified to ſucceed in ſome parts of the art and not in others. They inſtance the fine colouring and bad taſte of deſign of the Venetians; the grand but rigid drawing and bad colouring of the Florentines; the dignity, grace, and elevated ſtyle of the Romans; the clumſineſs of the Flemings; and the poverty and vulgarity of the Dutch. Let us examine this.

Art was conſiderably advanced in Italy before any difference was viſible in the pur-

purſuits and ſtyles of the different ſchools, and then the difference was owing to accident. The firſt painters of Florence, Venice, &c. were all of them of the ſame leaven, although there be better and worſe amongſt them, yet the ſtyle is the ſame, they ſet out from the ſame point, and were in the ſame road; their pictures appear the work of the ſame people, and to be taken from the ſame objects; they are dry, cold, meagre, and wooden: they improved as they went on, ſome faſter, ſome ſlower, according as their education and other advantages furniſhed them with opportunities. Andrea of Piſa, who flouriſhed ſo early as 1337, ſtudied the baſſo relievo of Meleager and Atalanta, and other antiques, which the people of Piſa had brought from Greece. Afterwards Ghiberti, the Florentine, poſſeſſed many caſts from the antique. Squarcione, of Padua, alſo had amaſſed, in his travels through Greece and other places, a good collection of antique ſtatues, relievos, &c.

upon which his pupils, of whom he had one hundred and thirty-ſeven, had formed their taſte and practice. It is hard to ſay what became of all theſe ſcholars, but many of them muſt ſurely have diſſeminated what they knew about Lombardy; and Andrea Mantagna, one of them, had in all Italy, at that time, no competitor who was ſo well ſtudied in the antique. On the other hand Maſſaccio, the Florentine, born in 1417, was (independent of his other excellencies) the beſt colouriſt and moſt natural painter of the time he lived in. L. da Vinci, and Fra. Bartolomeo, alſo were both Florentines; the former was a moſt excellent colouriſt and the actual diſcoverer of that fine manner of relievo and colouring, which afterwards diſtinguiſhed the Venetian ſchool; and Fra. Bartolomeo's colouring is very little inferior to Titian himſelf. But the Florentines, by their very general application to ſtatuary, have been more particularly led into the ſtudy of form, anatomy, and

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ſuch parts of the art as were common to painting and ſculpture: and M. Angelo, whoſe ſuperior ſkill and power in all the parts of drawing and knowledge of the figure, had fixed the ſtyle and taſte of his countrymen, was, as all the world knows, a ſculptor, and had never made colouring an object of his ſtudy.

The Venetian painters who fixed the ſtyle of their countrymen were Giorgione and Titian. Giorgione took the hint of that fine manner of colouring which (as we obſerved before became the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of the Venetian ſchool) from L. da Vinci, the Florentine; and Titian, carried it to the greateſt poſſible perfection: but as Titian adopted this ſearch into colouring at an early period of his life, (and, comparatively ſpeaking,) knew but little of any thing elſe that might tempt him into other purſuits; he gave up almoſt his whole time in improving colouring to the utmoſt perfection it was capable of receiving: therefore, if

Titian is more remarkable as a colouriſt than as a draftſman, the climate has nothing to do in it. And M. Angelo, like the great and judicious artiſt that he was, did not aſcribe Titian's excellence at colouring, or his defects in the other parts, to any particular direction of genius which might enable him to ſucceed in any one part of the art more than in the others: no, he well knew that the acquiſition of art, in the whole together, or in the particular parts and diviſions of it, will always, in the hands of a man properly qualified, bear a juſt proportion to the application made, and to the advantages of ſtudy enjoyed. After praiſing Titian's colouring, his remark upon him is*: "It is a misfortune that the painters of Venice have not a better manner of ſtudy, and that they are not early initiated in the principles of ſound drawing, for if this man was as much aſſiſted by art and by the principles

* Vaſari's Life of Titian.

of

of deſign as he is by nature, no body could go further or do better, being poſſeſſed, as he is, with the fineſt ſpirit, and with a manner very eaſy, beautiful, and full of life."

This alone, without any raking up of climates, is fully ſufficient to account for the merits, demerits, and particular ſtyles of individual artiſts; and alſo of the collective and national bodies of them. M. Angelo executed admirably the deſigning part of a picture for which, by long and intenſe ſtudy, he had carefully qualified himſelf, whilſt he never underſtood the practice of colouring, for the ſame reaſon that Titian was defective in the deſign: ſo that it is viſible, from good authority, and example, (if we needed it), that the acquiſition of art lies in the method of ſtudy, and in the timely opportunities of procuring the proper materials for it.

Correggio, who is miſtakenly conſidered as a ſort of miracle, and to have made himſelf altogether by the force of

his * own unaſſiſted genius, in a little village, without precept or example, had, notwithſtanding two moſt excellent maſters to form him, Franceſco Bianci the friar, and Andrea Mantegna. Vedriani, in his account of Franceſco Bianci, ſays, that there were in his pictures "beautiful colouring, a fine ſpirit, graceful attitudes, and a pleaſing, elegant invention." Boſchini alſo deſcribes him as "a graceful, bold, and well finiſhed painter, and of a gouſto almoſt Venetian:" and Vedriani and Lanciolotto both inform us that Correggio ſtudied firſt under this maſter; he afterwards took his laſt leſſons from Andrea Mantegna, whoſe abilities and ſtudy of the antique are well enough known. Correggio's manner is therefore to be accounted for without recurring to miraculous powers: at ſecond hand, he might ſoon get from Mantegna's ſtudies after the antique, ſomething of the air, general grace, and grandeur of the Greek ſta-

* Du Bos, vol. ii. p. 31, and 132.

tues;

ſtatues; yet, having ſtudied this matter only in the lump, we find his work often marred by a want of knowledge in that detail of adequate parts which ought to accompany the general idea, and which, as Vaſari juſtly obſerves, Correggio's good ſenſe and genius (that diſtinguiſhed itſelf ſo eminently in other things) would undoubtedly have ſoon acquired, had he the advantage of ſtudying the nobler and ideal parts of his art at their ſource: wanting this, his abilities were laid out in the acquiſition of the executive and other pleaſing though lighter accompliſhments. The ſame might be ſaid of the Modeneſe ſculptor, Antonio Begarelli, who, like his friend Correggio, though ſometimes inclining towards affectation, is yet often beautiful and grand in the general idea of his figures, though it muſt be confeſſed that the component parts of them are rather (generally ſpeaking) to be admired for a maſterly, ſpirited, and pleaſing imitation of common nature, than for a wiſe,

juſt, and ſcientical ſelection of parts, properly ſuited to the character of the figure, and indiſpenſibly neceſſary in every well ordered work of art.

Let us believe as we pleaſe of the ſtate of arts in Modena and Parma, before Correggio, yet, beſides the two maſters mentioned above, he cannot be ſuppoſed to be out of the road even of other information, when we conſider him as in the centre of the ſchools of art of Mantua, Bologna, Milan, Ferrara, Venice, and Florence. The conſtant intercourſe between thoſe places, the floating about of the artiſts and their works, muſt have been the means of ſpeedily diſſeminating, more or leſs, whatever improvements arts received in any one place, eſpecially as Modena and Parma were not inconſiderable towns. It muſt therefore be admitted, that although it be now difficult clearly to trace out any thing more than groſs and palpable connections, ſuch as the opening of a ſchool of art like that of Squarcione at Mantua, and

and that of Da Vinci at Milan, or ſimply thoſe of maſter and ſcholar; yet there muſt have been then ten thouſand infiniteſſimally ſmall connections, advantages, and means of information and improvement of great importance, which, at this diſtance of time, are buried in oblivion.

As to Bologna, although there were very good painters there before the Carraches, yet the Bologneſe were not diſtinguiſhable for any ſuperiority over their cotemporaries in other places until that time; and then they only endeavoured at uniting and collecting together the different excellencies of the ſeveral ſchools of Italy. Lodovico ſtudied del Sarto, &c. at Florence, Correggio and Parmeggiano at Parma and Modena; at Mantua, Giulio Romano and Primaticcio; and Titian, &c. at Venice: he alſo availed himſelf much of his countryman Tibaldi, the great imitator of M. Angelo, and whom he uſed to call "il ſuo Buonarotti riformato." In Annibal's works there is trace-

able imitations of the Greeks, of M. Angelo in the Syſtine chapel, of Rafaelle in the Vatican, of Correggio at Parma, and of Titian at Venice. His brother Auguſtino was in the ſame track, though he conceals it better. Thoſe three Carraches manifeſted great genius and moſt manly abilities in uniting theſe perfections of the different ſchools; and yet we find thoſe great luminaries ſomewhat weakened in their luſtre in paſſing even through this firſt medium, and ſtill more ſo when it came to their ſcholars, and to their ſucceſſors, amongſt whom (as will be always the caſe of ſuch a multiplied imitation) it ultimately loſt all its vigour.

There is then no occaſion to ſuppoſe that the Venetian Painters were impelled to the purſuit of colouring by their air, climate, or their food, or by any particular texture in the fibres of their eyes; or, abſurdly to imagine, that the Bolognese artiſts were influenced at one and the ſame time by the different climates

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and mediums of air of Rome, Florence, Venice, and Parma: a je-ne-ſçai-quoi would come badly out of the mouth of a philoſopher, who it is ſuppoſed muſt and can give reaſons for all things; therefore it is that theſe notions of climate, however vague and looſe, come in very opportunely to raiſe a learned miſt before the eyes of the reader, when the writer's knowledge and information comes ſhort of the enquiry; which muſt, as we have obſerved before, be often the caſe, as, generally ſpeaking, there is nothing more remote from the inveſtigations of our modiſh philoſophers than the labyrinths of practical art, and the manner and meaſure of its migration from one place to another.

As to the Dutch taſte, I ſhall leave it to the deep reſearches of the Hon. Horace Walpole, or to any other learned gentleman (if ſuch another can be found) who may happen to have a guſto for this kind of art. It is indeed out of my way

(which he will readily admit) and therefore I ſhall turn to the Flemings, and propoſe a queſtion or two to thoſe philoſophical critics who would have us believe that the Flemiſh and German taſte originated from a certain flabbineſs, corpulence, and rotundity of the nature of the country which they ſuppoſe Rubens, Joardans, &c. by a ſort of natural neceſſity, brought into their pictures. We may firſt aſk, if the painters of theſe countries, who lived before the time of Rubens, are remarkable for this kind of ſtyle. On the contrary, is not John Van Eyk, and many others before Rubens, as remarkable for the other extreme, for a meagre poverty in their figures, like the early Florentines and other Italian artiſts, whilſt the art was growing up among them. Is not Albert Durer, Martin of Antwerp, and Lucas d'Olanda, often remarkable for the ſame fault. Where then did Rubens, the eclat of whoſe character has ſet a mark upon his country,

where

where did he get the ſtyle and manner of deſign that he adopted, and that others have imitated?

Tintoret of Venice had but a bad foundation of drawing; he underſtood very ill the human figure, and was very unequal to the taſk of ſelecting the elegancies, beauties, and ingredients of character, as they lay ſcattered through general nature; yet, with all this deficiency, he was a man of great warmth of ſoul, and has, with prodigious rapidity, upon which he fooliſhly valued himſelf, hurried through an infinity of pictures. He wiſhed to unite the colouring of Titian to M. Angelo's drawing and ſtyle of deſign; but Angelo's manner, though it might ſometimes have its faults, was yet always ſo grounded upon an intenſe and regular ſtudy of nature and ſcience, that it was no wonder if Tintoret was never able to conceive any thing about it. Rubens, though with much more literature and an elegant claſſical knowledge, was,

with

with reſpect to the fundamentals of his profeſſion, nearly ſuch another character as Tintoret: he began to paint early, and had never any regular timely foundation in the fundamental principles of deſign and choice of nature; he alſo was deſirous of adopting the grand ſtyle of deſign: but his cielings at Whitehall, his Luxembourg gallery, and his works in general, are inconteſtible proofs that his want of ſucceſs in this attempt, was more owing to the irregularity and defects of his own education as an artiſt, than to the deformity of any nature whatever. He did not find his characters in nature; for although there are in moſt countries men as burly and corpulent as his figures, yet there is no race of men in the world, nor never was, in whom may be found, united to this corpulence, all that power of flexion, diſtortion of attitude, that exhibition, diſtinctneſs, and bold pronouncing of muſcles, that is obſervable in the figures of Rubens. Theſe are things incon-

inconſiſtent with each other, and it is impoſſible to find them exiſting together in the ſame ſubject. The muſcles are always, more or leſs, viſible as their interſtices, or the notches between them are more or leſs filled with fat; and in very fat figures theſe interſtices are ſo filled up, that the whole becomes one uniform round ſurface, and no muſcle at all is viſible. Rubens's figures are then creatures of idea and falſe ſyſtem, and ariſe from an attempt at grandeur and ſublimity of character, without the knowledge neceſſary to give ſucceſs to this attempt. Perhaps it would be very difficult to prove that Rubens did not borrow much of this manner from the Venetian painters. Paul Veroneſe has the ſame Turkiſh fierceneſs and ill ſuſtained conſequence in the airs of his heads; and Tintoret has the ſame injudicious mixture of contrary qualities and want of propriety and proportion.

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I am not ſufficiently acquainted with the hiſtory of the Spaniards and their education, to diſcover whether or no there were any moral impediments to their acquiring a perfection in the arts; and without this knowledge nothing can be determined with ſatisfaction or juſtice; for it is not enough to ſay, as the Abbé du Bos has done*; that arts were imported into a country; that a king would encourage, but could find no one of his people deſerving it; and, ergo, that his people had no genius in this way. For ſome different, more happy and improved combination might ariſe afterwards, (as was the caſe in Italy) which would ſhew the raſhneſs and falſehood of ſuch a concluſion.

We ſhall conclude this part of our work by obſerving, that after the infinity of evils which had long deluged Italy, the natives of that country, about the

* Vol. ii. page 114.

time

time of Cimabue, were like a new people growing up with wants, which their own induſtry was to ſupply. Their religious perſuaſion, in favour of ſtatues and pictures, afforded a new mine of art in the ſubjects of Chriſtian ſtory: they were deſirous of ornamenting their churches with pictures and ſtatues upon the plan of Chriſtianity, and there were no works of this kind in a better ſtate in other countries than in their own; they could not now, as they had done before in the time of the old Romans, bury and ſuffocate the efforts of their own people, under the more perfect arts and artiſts imported from Greece. The Greeks were now no better than themſelves; ſo that at this time, the arts ſet out upon the true footing in Italy, and in all their long ſeries of artiſts, from the oldeſt and worſt to the lateſt and beſt of them, we ſee that every man was in his time taken for a prodigy, and his works conſidered as the utmoſt ſtretch of the human

man capacity. The artiſt and the age for which he painted were ſo fitted to the weakneſs of each other, that admiration was kept conſtantly alive during the whole ſucceſſive progreſs from barbariſm to perfection. The public grew up in judgment and taſte in the ſame progreſſive manner that the artiſt did in his practice. In the begining we ſee it was ſome time before any thing more could be produced than a ſort of man, blocked out in general, as one may ſay; and yet the people thought wonders had been done. The ſecond race of artiſts deſcended a little to particulars, and diſtinguiſhed the limbs and the form of them; this then becomes the object of admiration. Artiſts ſtudy anatomy, in order to give truth and perfection to thoſe forms; it becomes the bon ton of an age; and perſpective is the ſame in another age: they run too far in their reſearches and refinements both of the one and the other; yet this exceſs ſhews that much

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of their attention was turned this way, and that a ſtrong impreſſion of thoſe ſciences muſt have been left upon people's minds. Fancy, poetical invention, beauty, dignity, grace, &c. came to be ſought afterwards, and the people were prepared to receive it: another particular of the greateſt conſequence to them was, that there was no vicious decaying art at that time in any nation which might be imported into Italy to miſlead and corrupt the people* into the ſearch of ornaments and fripperies, before they had regularly and ſolidly employed themſelves upon the foundation and ſubſtance of art. This people had therefore every thing to favour them in their growth; and they accordingly did arrive, ſtep after ſtep, to that degree of ſtrength and maturity as juſtly entitled them to have been the admiration of Europe.

* As is perhaps the caſe of the Engliſh at preſent, between the expiring ſchools of Italy and France.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

The Introduction of ſuperior Art in England prevented by the accidental Change of Religion.

NOW we have ſhewn to what cauſes we might properly aſcribe the riſe, ſucceſs, and different perfections of art in the countries where it had exiſted; let us turn ourſelves to the Britiſh dominions; and if it be evident that the ſame opportunities and advantages did not concur to favour our acquiſition of the arts, but on the contrary that every thing was diametrically oppoſite, we can therefore with every colour of reaſon and truth exculpate that climate and that genius which were never put to a fair trial of the extent of their powers. It will appear that the accidental circumſtance of the change of religion, which happened juſt at the time we ſhould have

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ſet out in the arts, gave us a diſlike to the ſuperior and nobler parts; the ſubjects of Chriſtian ſtory, which might be generally underſtood and felt, were then prohibited, ſo that, except landſcape, portrait, and ſtill life, every thing elſe was either unintelligible or unintereſting to the people at large: the artiſts were then naturally led to practiſe only the baſer and lower branches. The farther they advanced in theſe, the wider they wandered from the truth and dignity of art; and we ſhould, no doubt, have gone on paſt all hope of recovery, were it not for another accident, as little connected with climate as the former; I mean our cultivation of Greek, Italian, and French literature, where we unavoidably acquired ſomething of a juſt taſte for the fine arts: but as we were at the ſame time growing up amidſt the corruptions of debaſed art, infections variouſly communicated, have hitherto exceedingly retarded our progreſs, and it is not over-

likely that they will be very ſoon totally removed.

Francis I. and Henry VIII. lived in the ſame time; and, with reſpect to the arts, the two countries of England and France were in the ſame ſtate of ignorance and barbariſm; their buildings were Gothic; they both painted upon glaſs; and it is hard to ſay which of them was the worſt in their monuments of ſculpture. But Francis had been in Italy, from whence he brought to his own country many monuments of ſound art for his people to form themſelves by. With this view he invited L. da Vinci, Roſſo, Primaticcio, Nicolo del Abate, Cellini, and many other great artiſts into his ſervice. By his order Battiſta della Palla was ſtripping Florence of all pictures, ſculptures, &c. that he could poſſibly come at, as well antiques as thoſe of the moſt diſtinguiſhed moderns. Antonio Mini, the ſcholar of M. Angelo, carried into France with him at this time the

the greateſt part of Angelo's deſigns and cartoons, two caſes of models, &c. The only remaining entire copy of that famous cartoon of M. Angelo, which was deſtroyed in the inſurrection at Florence, went alſo into France. About the year 1537, Primaticcio and Vignola had moulded, by the order of this Francis, the ſtatues of the Venus, the Laocoon, the Cleopatra, Marcus Aurelius, the Tiber, the Nilus, the Column of Trajan, &c. They alſo brought into France one hundred and forty antique ſtatues, with a great number of buſtos. Rafaelle, beſides other pictures, painted his transfiguration for France, and the picture that was executed in competition with it, of the reſurrection of Lazarus, by M. Angelo and Seb. del Piombo was actually ſent there, and is now in the collection at the Palais Royal.

Thus painting and ſculpture, which were grown to a ſtate of maturity in Italy, were in this ſtate introduced into France in the

ſame manner as the good taſte of architecture was into the ſtate of Venice, which is the reaſon why in thoſe places there have been ſo few intermediate artiſts between their ſtates of barbariſm and perfection.

Whilſt Francis was thus taken up with introducing the arts into his kingdom, our Henry was engaged in warm controverſies with Luther, afterwards with the pope. Toto del Nunciata, Rovezzano, and Holbein, came over to England, and the Reformation came over alſo: the hiſtory of this Reformation, the general ferment and colliſſion of religious opinions, the pulling down * of pictures, images, &c. and the ſetting fire to them by public authority. In ſhort, the whole ſpirit and activity of the nation turned into this channel; for four reigns ſucceſſively preſent a very different kind of picture from that of France. It was then exceedingly idle (to ſay nothing worſe) in

* Strype's Annals, p. 171, and Burnet p. 60.

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the Abbé Du Bos to overlook all this, and to conſider the arrival of Holbein in England as a proper foundation on which he candidly ſuppoſes the natives, if they had any genius, muſt have raiſed a ſuperſtructure. Why did he not chuſe to recollect that ſuch a ſuperſtructure was then the abomination of our people, and that they were every day proſcribing, decrying, and objecting to it, in their controverſies with the other nations of Europe? To ſay the truth, the Chriſtian church, at the time of the Reformation, appears to have been ſo much heated by diſputes, that neither of the parties, as well the Reformers as the Catholics, ſeemed to have been the leaſt diſpoſed to do any ſort of juſtice to the fine qualities of the other; every thing was warped by paſſion and hatred, and the arts, which were the honour and ornament of Italy at that time, could not by conſequence eſcape being criminated and unfortunately

ſpurned and trampled under the feet of reformers.

Attempts were made in the beginning of the reign of Charles I. to introduce arts and elegance into the kingdom, and much was done in the way of making a collection; but what followed ſoon after ſhewed, but too convincingly, how little the public in general were diſpoſed to cultivate national art, until this zeal for religious canting and reformation had ſpent itſelf. It is then no great matter of wonder that the Engliſh were remarkable for nothing but portraits *, and that Vandyk, Lely, &c. who had been born and educated in great hiſtorical ſchools abroad, were better qualified to ſucceed in this, or any other branch of the art, than a few ſcattered ignorant natives, who were never educated for it.

About the reign of queen Anne and George I. our religious jarring, and its

* Du Bos, and Mariette,

political

political conſequences, was much ſubſided; all parties had by this time pretty well ground off their aſperities, they grew tired of ill-humour, and aſhamed of ruſticity; and as the arts came to be ſought for and conſidered as an acquiſition to our elegancies, it looked ſomething like a favourable outſet. But national art was now, generally ſpeaking, imperfect and unformed; the hands ſo lately freed from the manacles of reformation were but little fitted to the purpoſe for which they were now wanting; hence it was, that although ſome ſmall part of this demand for art has of late years flowed naturally into the hands of the natives, and has been the means of ſo rapid an improvement ſince, as is, I believe, without example in the hiſtory of any other people; yet the main body of this ſtream has unfortunately taken another courſe, and is waſting itſelf away in the watering of decayed roots and the

young ſuckers that ſprout from them. In ſhort, our demands for art have principally tended to multiply the importation of foreign pictures, ſtatues, and all other things that go under the denomination of virtu.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Abuſes under the miſtaken Notion of introducing the Arts.

THERE has been in the courſe of the laſt two centuries a great number of books upon the arts and the artiſts, publiſhed all over Europe, and ſome of them were wrote by ſkillful men; they have carried the fame of the illuſtrious artiſts into the moſt obſcure corners, where the celebrated names of M. Angelo, Da Vinci, Rafaelle, Titian, Correggio, Parmeggiano, &c. came to be liſped even by the children in picture knowledge, and men are enliſted zealous admirers of works they had never ſeen, who, with all their enthuſiaſm, are likely enough to miſtake theſe objects of their predilection for any thing elſe, and any thing elſe for them, whenever they happen to encounter by accident.

It is however certain that modern taſte and art have derived great utility from this eſtimation in which the celebrated ancients are ſo generally held. But the abſurd abuſe of it (and it is more liable to be abuſed than otherwiſe) is the diſgrace of our country and age, and has been lying a dead weight upon the loins of national improvement.

Artful men, both at home and abroad, have not failed to avail themſelves of this paſſion for ancient art, as it afforded a fine coverlet for impoſition, for vending, in the name of thoſe great maſters, the old copies, imitations, and ſtudies, of all the obſcure artiſts that have been working in Italy, Flanders, and other places for two hundred years paſt. Theſe things are to be had in great plenty, and may be (as I have often known at Rome) eaſily baptized; firſt thoughts, ſecond thoughts with alterations, duplicates, and what not. The great admiration ſo deſervedly beſtowed on ſome antique ſtatues in the

pope's,

pope's, the duke of Tuſcany's, the Borgheſi, and other princely collections, is alſo turned to good account by thoſe dealers. When the Italians, between two and three centuries ago, were digging in the ruins for ſtatues, &c. they only preſerved what they thought worth it, the refuſe they either threw with the reſt of the rubbiſh back again into the cava, or ſuffered to be diſperſed without care. Now as the name of antique is with many paſſport ſufficient, theſe cavas are opened once more, and all the obſcure corners of Rome are raked for old marble (it is indeed for the moſt part but little more) to ſell to ſuch of the rich Ingleſi, whoſe paſſion for collecting antiques might outrun their knowledge of the merit and value of them. It would be endleſs to give an account of all the various ways in which our antiquaries and picture dealers, with their whippers in and dependents, both at home and abroad, carry on this buſineſs of impoſition; let it ſuffice to

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ſay, that it is the moſt difficult thing in the world for any travelling gentleman who may be inclined to purchaſe, to avoid the ſpringes and the nets that are ſo artfully laid for them.

The great models of perfection are in Italy, but theſe are not now to be purchaſed. The pope has officers appointed to inſpect every picture, ſtatue, &c. going out of Rome, and admitting the poſſibility of bribing theſe officers, (another ſource of trick in the dealer) even the third or fourth rate things, are too well known to be moved without making a noiſe. The ſtate of Venice have alſo ſet their ſeal upon all the pictures they thought worth the keeping; ſo that this ill fated country of ours is to be crammed with nothing but rubbiſh from abroad; and our artiſts at home muſt neceſſarily, to avoid riſquing the diſpleaſure of their patrons, favour this mockery and cheat that is put upon them. I feel myſelf at preſent in an aukward ſituation; I am going

going to make apologies for what I have ſaid, and am conſcious that it muſt be diſagreeable to many very excellent people, diſtinguiſhed as well by their ſuperior underſtanding (though not perhaps in matters of taſte) as by their rank and fortune: but what could I do? this great mountain of rubbiſh that has overlayed national advancement, was directly in the way of my *ſubject*. And a moſt excellent writer, David Hume, has well obſerved before me, that this importation of foreign art, was the real cauſe why the ancient Romans never were able to produce any thing in the arts that did them honour; however, the caſe is not in all parts exactly parallel, for the victorious Romans ſtripped Greece of every thing that was excellent and valuable; and if they buried the genius of their own country, they buried it however under the moſt conſummate monuments of foreign perfection; whereas our importations

tions and numerous ſales of pictures can hardly be conſidered in any other light, than as a common cloaca and ſink, through which all the refuſe and filth of Europe is emptied into this country.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

That the ſuperior Style of the Grecian and and Italian Art is not owing to any natural Superiority in the bodily Structure of thoſe People.

IT has been long obſerved that many of our travellers are exceedingly unjuſt in their remarks upon foreign nations, particularly upon the Italians: either from religious or other prejudices, they are inclined to regard every thing with an evil eye, and the morals, underſtanding, manners, and modes of living in Italy are virulently and unjuſtly pictured out in very hateful colours *; their per-

* Thoſe who have had an opportunity of knowing the real character of the Italians, and who love truth, will the more readily excuſe ſome of our late culprits in this particular, as they have (though without intending it) given occaſion to the publication of that excellent book which Mr. Barretti has written upon the ſubject.

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ſons have not been forgot, the general run of our people that I have known abroad, inſiſt ſtrenuouſly that except the ſparkling dark eyes of their women, the perſons of the Italians of both ſexes are remarkably wanting in all the advantages of form and colour. On the other hand we are not without thoſe who do more than juſtice to the foreigners, and who can be pleaſed with nothing that is of their own growth; half critics in the arts, who, from a train of ſhallow ridiculous obſervation, pretend to deduce the ſuperiority of taſte and beauty in the Greek ſtatues and Italian pictures, from a more beautiful ſyſtem of nature and ſuperior proportions, which they *affect* to diſcover in the natives of thoſe two countries. Every circumſtance of difference, between the Greeks, Italians, and the Engliſh (and there are viſible differences), they conſider in the firſt place as advantages, and ſecondly as permanent advantages, faſtened to the climate and nature

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of the Greeks and Italians. Such reaſoners are not worth much attention: but as the differences, beauties, and deformities of nations and claſſes of men is very obſervable, is a complicated and curious matter, and not out of our way, we will endeavour to purſue it a little.

Plutarch tells us, that Lycurgus, in order to ſhew the Spartans an example of the power and influence of habit, and of the differences produced by different modes of education, had trained up two whelps in ways oppoſite to their natures: the one, a cur, he had conſtantly exerciſed and habituated to the chace; the other, a greyhound, was well fed, and accuſtomed to no place but the kitchen. Thoſe dogs he produced before the people, and at the ſame time ſet loſe a hare on the one ſide, and laid eatables on the other; the cur gave chace to the hare, and the hound went greedily to his food, as each had been accuſtomed to do. If education will then produce ſuch a change

and difference in ſo limited a ſubject as dogs, how much more numerous and complicated muſt thoſe differences be in man, who has in him the ſeeds of a much greater variety, and who is fitted to an infinity of purſuits, and conſequently liable, from theſe purſuits, to an infinity of differences, as well in his bodily ſtructure, as in the texture and extent of his mind.

Is a man born in England when Cæſar makes his deſcent? he is found like a hardy Indian, delighting in feats of war and activity, and expoſed to all ſeaſons. Does he live in the monkiſh ages? he is clouted up to the eyes, and buried in the cobwebs of his cell, meditating upon ſaints and holy viſions. Is he a ſnuffling fanatic, with his hair cut round in a diſh, his ſententious ſcarcity of words, his inanimate and meaſured formality; or is he one of the lively mercuries about the court of Charles II. Is he bred at Wapping or at St. James's? Is he bred a ſmith, a mercer, or a ſoldier? Does he till

till the land? Is he a waterman, common-council-man, or is he a waiter at a tavern or coffe-houſe? If a woman, does ſhe ſell fiſh or millinery ware? Is ſhe a fat greaſy cook, or has ſhe the delicacy, vapours, ſmelling-bottles, flirt, giddineſs, and low ſpirits of higher life? Theſe diviſions or different ſpecies of people, are alſo open to ſtill greater complications, from the form of government, from war, from peace, from commerce, from a mixture with ſtrangers, from the general ignorance or learning of the age, from morality, and from the prevalence of religion or irreligion.

Although every individual has conſtitutionally an ideoſyncracy or peculiar tendency of diſpoſition, which will operate in all ſituations, yet we find that the coup d' oeil and great outlines of the human character, will be always formed by the objects that his fortune and ſituation has made him acquainted with. Little is known of the original ſtate of any thing,

either animal or vegetable; what we ſee every where of horſes, dogs, grain of all kinds, fruit, flowers, &c. is the reſult of an infinite number of intentional and accidental combinations. Now as it is abſolutely impoſſible that our philoſophers, or indeed any body elſe, can ever be ſo furniſhed with the facts, as to obtain a diſtinct view of all theſe ingredients that compoſe the human character, and to ſeparate and weigh the quantity and degree of each as it is grafted on the original ſtamina, it is ridiculous to pretend to decide any thing about the original differences (if there be any) between the Greeks, the Italians, the French, and the Engliſh. We can never decompound ſufficiently ſo as to diſcover theſe ſtamina in their ſimple and naked ſtate; we cannot therefore pretend to pourtray them, and I am of opinion, that if vanity, prejudice, and national pique, did not give a circulation to ſuch pictures, evidence and conviction never would.

Lucian

Lucian, in his dialogue on the Gymnaſtic exerciſes, has placed this important truth, of the influence of habit and education, in a very beautiful and pertinent light. He makes Solon to ſay, "Our firſt and principal concern is, how to make our citizens virtuous in mind and ſtrong in body—after the care and inſtructions of their mothers, nurſes, and tutors—and when they come to underſtand what is right and commendable; when a ſenſe of ſhame, baſhfulneſs, diffidence, and a love of virtue begins to ſpring in their minds; and when their bodies are become ſufficient to endure toil and labour, their joints and members compact and more firmly knit together, they are then taken and inſtructed, as to their minds, in other branches of learning, and taught in another manner to accuſtom their bodies to hardſhips and fatigues. For we are by no means of opinion, that it is ſufficient for us to be, either in mind or body, thoſe things only that nature made

us. Either part of us ſtands in need of diſcipline and inſtruction, by means of which the good that is in us may be rendered much better, and the bad amended and redreſſed. We oblige them to inure themſelves to toil, not with a view to the games only, that they may obtain the prizes, to which but a few out of many can attain, but that they may by theſe means be enabled to acquire, for themſelves and their country, a much greater good. There is a conteſt, Anacharſis, of another kind, and of much more general concern, in which all good citizens ſhould be engaged; and a crown, not made up of olive, pine, or parſley, but comprehending the happineſs and welfare of mankind, as liberty, private and public wealth, &c. all theſe things are interwoven in this crown, and are the reſult of the conteſt I ſpeak of, and to which theſe exerciſes and theſe labours are not a little conducive.—By inuring them to labour, we not only make them healthier and ſtronger,

ſtronger, but lighter alſo; they cannot only hold through a long race but perform it with the utmoſt expedition. The exerciſes of the diſcus not only ſtrengthens the ſhoulders, but gives a ſpring and vigour even to the extreme parts; and their ſtrength grows the faſter by exerciſe. —You may gueſs what ſort of fellows they are like to prove in arms, who, even naked, are wont to ſtrike terror into their enemies: whoſe bodies are neither overloaded with fleſh, palid and unactive, nor meagre, white, and livid like thoſe of women; almoſt putrid by being kept always from the air; ſhivering, apt with the leaſt motion to run down with ſweat, and panting beneath the burden of an helmet, eſpecially if the ſun ſhines hot — Whereas our tawny, ſun-burnt, hard-favoured youth, that ſeem full of ſpirit, vital heat, and manly vigour; have their bodies in ſuch proper order, as on the one hand to be neither dry nor ſhrivelled, nor too ſtuffed or heavy on the other; but

keeping them within due limits they waſte away by ſweating all ſuperfluous and uſeleſs fleſh, and ſtrenuouſly preſerve, without the mixture of any unſoundneſs, whatever conduces to render them ſtrong and active. For theſe exerciſes operate upon our bodies like a winnowing fan upon corn, blowing away the chaff and ſtraw, and ſeparating, cleaning, and heaping up the grain. I ſhould be glad to ſet before you one of your white-ſkinned fellows, that has always lived under cover, with a delicate complexion, ſoftened and melted almoſt with luxury and cockering, and looking white, as well from the ſcarcity of blood, as from its retiring all to the inward parts, and to compare him with any of thoſe bred here in the gymnaſium. Their compact, well-ordered and beautiful frame of body, their courage, their ſurpriſing health and vigour, their admirable ſkill, their indefatigable ſtrength, their boldneſs, their ardour and emulation, their unconquerable reſolution, unwearied

wearied application and folicitude to obtain the victory. Indeed Anacharfis, if you take out of human life the love of glory, what virtue can a man expect to find, or who will be fond of performing any ſplended action *?"

Thus the ancient Greeks could find nothing in human nature but rude materials, which it coſt them great labour to cultivate and faſhion up to national and glorious purpoſes; their fine ſhapes and proportions did not (we ſee) ſpring up like graſs out of the earth, but out of the exerciſes of the Pentathlon, and out of all the other exerciſes, ſtudies, and progreſſive mental and bodily improvements of an education, exceedingly perfect and happily calculated to form the beſt models of beauty, dignity, and virtue: and my Lord Shafteſbury has well ſaid, that

* The reader will find in Weſt's Diſſertation on the Olympic Games many uſeful and pertinent applications of theſe and other paſſages in this dialogue of Lucian.

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the "principal reaſon why the Greek artiſts, at the time that the arts were in their glory amongſt them, arrived at ſuch truly wonderful perfection is, that they painted and carved the Greeks. When you ſee and admire (ſays he) what they have done in braſs and marble, what majeſty, what beauty, what grace their figures expreſs, remember Salamis and Marathon where they fought, and Thermopylæ where they devoted themſelves for the liberty of their country." And yet there is ſomething further to be conſidered in this matter.

The human mind was able to raiſe its ideas of perfection to a pitch far above any thing nature had produced, even with all the ſuperadded advantages of the beſt education; and the ancients writers aſſure us that the Grecian artiſts, like their poets, moraliſts, &c. did not (as ſo many Peruginos and Bellinis) content themſelves with merely copying what they ſaw: they juſtly conſidered

ſidered even the completeſt individuals, only as approximations to an abſtract perfect ſtandard. They accordingly took from one, added to another, encreaſed, diminiſhed, and produced a combined conſiſtency and harmony of parts, adapted to the ſeveral claſſes of character. Their Apollo Belvedere, Hercules, fighting Gladiator, Venus, Torſo, Junos, Minervas, &c. can therefore be no otherwiſe conſidered as copied from the Grecians, then in this ſenſe, they are the ſiftings and diſtillations of aggregated nature: and let me add, that however irreconcilable this may be with the unfledged, debaſed notions of mechanical dabblers, the arts of painting and ſculpture, like their other ſiſter poetry, have an archetype before them very different from individual, imperfect nature; and Ariſtotle's rule of "prefering the probable impoſſible, to the poſſible, which has no veriſimilitude, which would not be believed," is of equal importance to painters

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as well as poets. The defective real character is tolerable, becauſe we know it; but when, only the repreſentation of it is ſeen, it becomes improbable, and the minds revolts from a ſyſtem of proportions and character of features that wants propriety, correſpondence, and uniſon. So that the poetical aſſemblage of harmonious proportions and features, is the only one which, in a work of art, can ſtrike the beholder with the idea of conſiſtency and truth: for inſtance, the legs of the fighting Gladiator have the ſame character as his arm and the other parts; but in individual nature all theſe parts are never found to agree. Some little artiſts, from the courſe of a confined practice of mere imitation, (of portraits, landſcapes, &c.) are liable (as every day's experience ſhews) to great miſtakes in this matter. They know not what they ſay, when they talk of truth, of the following of nature, the being unnatural, and ſo forth; I ſhall take the liberty to

to tell them that nature is any thing, is every thing they pleaſe to look for, and they may follow it in any track, in dirt or divinity, in baſeneſs or in heroiſm.

I am not apt to underate the works of the great Italians in the beginning of the ſixteenth century, and yet it muſt here be acknowledged, that not one of them ſeems to have been completely in poſſeſſion of this principle of collecting and combining the ſcattered beauties of nature, and according it with the character of their figures. They have left no work, either of painting or marble, that, like what the Greeks have done, is remarkable for this excellence. The acknowledged ſuperiority of Rafaelle lay in other parts of his art, and not in the bellezza of the naked. M. Angelo has it not, though in truth he was moſt powerfully in poſſeſſion of every other ability regarding the human figure: but his Moſes at S. Pietro in Vincoli, his Chriſt at the Minerva, his prophets and other figures at the Syſtine

chapel

chapel and at Florence, are all of them more to be admired for an elevated grandeur, and for a knowledge and happy accord of all the parts as compoſing one whole, than for a juſt propriety in adapting them to the nature of the characters they were meant to repreſent. Poor Franceſco Parmeggiano ſeems, of all others, to have been the man calculated to give this laſt hand to art. He was, it is true, ſometimes affected and over-done: but his latter works, which are ſo ſtrongly impregnated with this divine excellence, give ſufficient indications of the powers that were impriſoned within him, and which, by an unlucky train of accidental misfortunes, were buried with him in an untimely grave. Having removed this confuſion and jumbling of real life, with the abſtract and ideal combinations of it in painting and ſtatuary, we ſhall now proceed to make a few obſervations upon the preſent inhabitants of Greece, Italy, France, and England.

There

There are vaſt numbers of Greeks and Levantines at Venice, and one is ſtruck at firſt ſight with a certain air of elevated character and pictureſque natural beauty about them, that is not ſeen in the Italians, French, or Engliſh; this does not altogether ariſe either from the novelty of their appearance, or from any prejudices in their favour from our admiration of their anceſtors, or from any vanity to ſhew our own ſkill and diſcernment in tracing out long reſemblances and family likeneſſes. Theſe, no doubt, have ſometimes their weight, and the fanciful curious diſcoveries and magnified deſcriptions of many writers and travellers but too clearly evince it: but upon analyzing the matter we ſhall find that they have actually the advantage in many particulars.

The neck, by being kept bare and unbound, acquires a majeſtic thickneſs, and riſes like a pillar from the ſhoulders. The beard is preſerved as a diſtinguiſhing

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maſculine characteriſtic, and diſplays a beautiful variety in all the different ſtages of man, from puberty to extreme age; and in all the different conſtitutions and complexions, where it is either thick or thin, long and lank, or ſhort and fuzzed. Further, the manner of their dreſs, looſe and unbound at the knees, and the feet in ſlippers, leaves them much at their eaſe; ſo that in ſitting or indolently lying along (which is but too much a practice with them) their limbs are naturally and unthinkingly thrown into a great variety of eaſy and beautiful attitudes. A figure of this kind muſt (conſidered only as a pictureſque object) have many advantages over the people of Italy, France, or England. They are bound at the knees, and accuſtomed to a ſtiff, unvaried, rectilinear manner of ſitting; their beards are ſhaven off; they have ſtocks and collars about their necks; and their ears are like plaſters preſſed cloſe to the head by tight wiggs. The actions and attitudes

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of their poliſhed people are poiſoned by ſyſtems of little, affected, ridiculous proprieties and French grimace, which has almoſt blotted out every trace of natural genuine action; ſome part of this deſcends even to their common people, according to their fortunes and circumſtances, and makes an exceedingly ridiculous mixture with thoſe peculiar modes of action and attitude which are formed amongſt handicrafts, by the exerciſe of particular trades.

There is, generally obſervable, in our men of advanced years, a great deformity about the lips, between the upper lip and the noſe, which appears fallen in, by reaſon of the riſing, and conſequently the projecture of the lower-jaw, upon the loſs of teeth: alſo beneath the chin, where the ſkin and plaſtima hyoideus hangs looſe and diſagreeably, like the dew-lap of oxen. Theſe defects nature meant to conceal by the beard; the ſame nature that takes away the bloom and

plumpneſs of youth, by age and wrinkles, has, however, provided in its place, what is not leſs valuable, a characteriſtic of awe and reverence, which is well adapted to that ſtate of mind that grows up with age, experience, and ſatiety: and there are many old people whoſe heads are unmeaning and indifferent enough, not to ſay diſagreeable, which, if they were ornamented with their natural beard, would command attention, and be thought heads of character; this will appear ſtrongly by only comparing the bearded friars of Italy, with thoſe friars of the ſame country who do not wear their beards.

The climate of Greece or Italy cannot be ſuppoſed to make the wearing of the beard more neceſſary there than in colder countries, where one ſhould imagine it would be found leſs inconvenient and more uſeful; and, from what we ſee of women, it is certain, that the men, who are leſs delicate, could run no

danger

danger from the cold, by having their arms or necks bare in France or England, if ſuch was the cuſtom,

The other people of Europe having copied the French as the model of elegance and propriety, whatever we have to obſerve upon their mode of education, will be referrable to the ſame mode any where elſe. It is difficult to find any Frenchman that would make a tolerable model to draw after in an accademy. The rules and laws of dancing, impreſſed early upon them, has unhinged and diſtorted the whole people. The neck of the femor, or thigh-bone, is almoſt twiſted out of its ſocket in the pelvis, by a deſire to make the toes turn out, which is at once productive of inſtability, deformity, and ungraceful unnatural movements. The ſpine or back-bone alſo, to which nature has, for very wiſe purpoſes, given a curve direction, ſomewhat reſembling that of the leg, from the hams to the the heel, they endeavour to force

a contrary way by ſtraitening it out. It is not neceſſary to mention the abſurdity of confounding all ages of man under a common cruſt of pomatum and powder, children chapeau bas, with grey heads, bags, ſwords, ſolitaires, muffs, and buckram ſkirted coats, hoops, ſtays, and high-heeled ſhoes: in ſhort, a French artiſt would find great occaſion to employ purges upon every part of the character and form of ſuch objects, before they could be any aſſiſtance to him in painting a bareſooted Phocion and his family. One is at a loſs to divine how ſuch abſurdities, and for ſuch ſilly purpoſes, could ever have been ſo univerſally adopted by a people ſo eminently diſtinguiſhed by their ability in all ſorts of valuable knowledge, and even that it ſhould obtain at the time when ſcience was at its acme amongſt them; but perhaps this might partly account for it, and they might have ſeen ſomething tending that way in the affectations and corruption

ruption of Italian art in the ſeventeenth century, as it appeared in the works of Guido, Bernini, Borromini, and others (in many reſpects very able and firſt rate geniuſes). But in juſtice we ought to take notice that many of thoſe over-ſtrained refinements are at preſent loſing ground in France, and there is reaſon to expect, that in a little time, an unaffected manly plainneſs will not be an uncommon character in that country.

We ſhall ſay but little about the proportions and features of the natives of our iſlands. Abbé du Bos has made reſpectful mention * of the beautiful proportions of our ſwine, bulls, and other quadrupeds, though he could diſcover nothing elſe worth his obſervation: but the Engliſh men have been remarked for the beauty of their form, even ſo early as Gregory the Great's time (and it was one of the motives for ſending over Auſtin the monk): and their deſcendents have

* Vol. i, p. 318.

given ſufficiently recent proofs that they are by no means behind others in the exertions of activity, ſpirit, and manly vigour. Our women alſo we ſhall but ſlightly mention, for it would have too much the appearance of an inſult over others, were we to do but half juſtice to their elegant arrangement of proportions, and beautiful, delicate, carnations. Our ſubject, however, makes it neceſſary to be a little particular. Whether from an inſular ſituation, or from whatever cauſe, we ſhall wave for the preſent; but it is evident that the colour of our people ſeems to be in a ſort of mediate proportion between the Hollanders and Germans, and the greateſt part of the people of Italy and the Southern parts of France. We are ſomething between the chalky fiſhy whiteneſs of the one, and the tawny unvarigated hue of the others. There is a delicate, peachy, bloom of complexion, very common in England, (which is the ſource of an infinite truly pictureſque variety,

riety, as it follows the directions and paſſions of the mind) that is rarely and but partially to be met with any where elſe, except in the fancied deſcriptions of the Greek and Latin poets. It is alſo to be obſerved, that ſome of the inhabitants of Scotland and the North of Ireland, are remarkable for light-coloured hair, and a light colour in the iris or ring of the eye, which generally follows. Theſe are all peculiarities I have been able to diſcover by a very diſpaſſionate and induſtrious enquiry; and any one who admits the orthodoxy of the Grecian taſte of beauty in their deſcriptions of the complexion and light hair of Apollo, Bacchus, Venus, and Achilles; and of the grey eyes of Minerva, will not except to us a few of theſe particulars: in all other reſpects there is no difference between the Greeks, the Italians, and the Engliſh; and I may add the French, ſo far as my inveſtigation has been able to penetrate their modiſh diſguiſes; there is the ſame diverſity,

or rather infinite variety, in the forms of their heads and in the parts that compoſe them. Round and full faces, long faces; ſome are flat, ſome projecting; ſome are broad above, ſome below; the noſes, ſome are long, ſome ſhort; ſome broad at the bony prominence, others at the cartilaginous part; ſome crooked, ſome more ſtrait; ſome are hollow and turned up, of the Socratic form; ſome convex and aquiline: the eyes, ſome are large, full, and round, ſome long and oval, others little, hollow, and ſharp: and the hair is of all claſſes and colours. Let me add here that there is in the Capitol at Rome, and other places, a vaſt number of buſtos portraits of the ancient Greeks and Romans; there are emperors, empreſſes, philoſophers, poets, &c. theſe have all the variety we have been juſt mentioning, and differ as much from the ideal figures of the Greeks and Romans, as the people about the ſtreets of London differ from them.

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This is all I am able to diſcover: the Italians, French, and Engliſh, are, like different trades, eaſily diſtinguiſhed from each other, by a general air and deportment, which ariſes from the tone of national education, and by their complexions, dreſs, &c. but not by any general tendency to any particular configuration of face, or of the parts which compoſe it.

There is another miſtake of ſome over-refined obſervers, which may well be taken notice of in this place. They aſcribe the grand ſtyle of deſign of the Greeks and Italians to the frequent opportunities that occur in ſuch warm climates, of ſeeing the people naked. But theſe criticks forget, that the people are not more naked in Florence and Bologna than they are at Rome, Naples, and Venice; they are even, on account of their ſitnation amongſt the Appenines, much colder; and yet the Florentines and the Bologneſe, M. Angelo, Bronzini, Tibaldi,

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An. Carrache, &c. have given more into the naked than the others, although they have no naked people at Bologna or Florence, except in the academy. One ſees, indeed, at times, in Naples and Venice, boatmen almoſt naked, and yet the painters of Venice and Naples have ſtudied and imitated the naked leſs than any other Italians. It is an attention to the ſublimities of the art that leads men to ſtudy the naked, and for this reaſon it was more practiſed by the Florentines: and it may be worth obſerving, that the ancient Britons were as naked as other ſavages; and that the practice of boxing alone, in our countries, furniſhes more frequent exhibitions of the naked and of the beſt kind, than any that are now to be met with in Italy.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

That the Engliſh Imagination and Judgment are capable of the greateſt Exertions, exemplified in their Poets.

WE ſhall now turn our view towards the powers of the mind, and examine how far a creative fertility of imagination, or a judgment in combining, is liable to be checked and retarded by the climate of the Britiſh iſlands.

All writers of character, who have employed their thoughts upon the productions of genius, are univerſally agreed, that the eſſence and ground-work of poetry and painting is in every reſpect the ſame; and Ariſtotle's Poetics and Horace's Epiſtle to the Piſos, will be found juſt as eſſentially applicable to painting as to poetry. There is neceſſary in both, the ſame glowing enthuſiaſtic fancy to go in ſearch of materials, and the ſame cool

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judgment is neceſſary in combining them. They collect from the ſame objects, and the ſame reſult or abſtract picture muſt be formed in the mind of each, as they are equally to be addreſſed to the ſame paſſions in the hearer or ſpectator. The ſcope and deſign of both is to raiſe ideas in the mind, of ſuch great virtues and great actions as are beſt calculated to move, to delight, and to inſtruct. In ſhort, according to Simonides's excellent proverb "painting is ſilent poetry, and poetry is a ſpeaking picture." Theſe arts, or rather theſe branches and emanations of the ſame art, which is deſign, have, from the nature of the materials they work with, each of them its peculiar advantages and diſadvantages. Nothing can give to poetry that preciſion of form and that aſſemblage and inſtantaneous reſult that painting has. On the other hand, poetry, if it loſes by the ſucceſſion of its images in one inſtance, it gains by it in another; and it has beſides, the power of dealing out

out infinite mental combinations, which no form can circumſcribe. Poetry not having lain under any interdict in England, we have a fair opportunity of ſatisfying ourſelves pretty tolerably, whether our artiſts in that way have been remarkably brain-bound by the north-eaſt winds and the rain, ſo ridiculouſly hinted at by Du Bos and Monteſquieu. We ſhall be very brief in our obſervations on the genius and talents of the Engliſh writers, as our reader is likely to be beforehand with us in every thing we have to offer upon ſo known a ſubject.

It would be very difficult to point out two poets of any country more amply poſſeſſed of the creative power of imagination than Shakeſpeare and Milton. Knowledge of every kind was in general but juſt emerging from the ſloth and barbariſm of paſt ages, when Shakeſpeare broke his way through the fetters and rubbiſh of the times, and ſoared, like an eagle, into all the regions of imagination;

tion; and though he carried along with him, in his flight, ſome part of this dirt and quibbling ſpirit ſticking to his pinnions, yet it ſerves rather to augment than to diminiſh our admiration of his abilities. No man of genius ever found his way to the heart with more ſucceſs; it is chained to his deſcriptions, and he leads us irreſiſtibly through the regions of fairy land, or through all the ſtorms and commotions of the human paſſions; he is equally inimitable, whether he paints feeling pictures of the dreadful effects of Othello's jealouſy, or of Mackbeth's ambition; or whether with a delicate maſtery and lightneſs of hand he draws out, in the character of Falſtaff, a ſtriking example of all the plauſibilities of feſtive, convivial talents, and of their little worth, and their pernicious tendency both to ourſelves and to others, when they are unſupported by real virtue and dignity of ſoul.

The

The imagination never was employed upon more extenſive, more variegated, or more profound matter, than Milton has brought together in his great poem. It required a more than Amphion ſkill to harmonize the unformed chaos into creation and beautiful order, as he has done it. To excavate the bed of the ocean; to weave for the earth the various texture of its green mantle, to ſpread over it the ſtuddied canopy of the heavens, and to mark out the career of the ſun, with the grey dawn and the pleiades dancing before him. The ample plains of heaven; the bower of paradiſe ſmiling through the emulation of ſpring and autumn; and the rueful, dreary, continents of hell, though they are ſcenes of the ſtrongeſt horror, beautiful, graceful variety, or awful ſublimity, yet we ſhall paſs them over as mere agents and back-ground only, in order to take a ſlight view of the perſonages which are the principals in theſe pictures. His angels, Uriel, Michael,

&c. B. iii. 636. 624. and B. v. 276. and B. xi. 240. either theſe are conceived in a tour of the moſt elegant poetical fancy, or we know of nothing that is. His Adam and Eve are figures in the truly Grecian ſtyle; they are undecked, ſave with their own naked majeſty; their beauties reſult from the ſuperior excellence of their conſtruction, B. iv. 283. and not from any adventitious ornaments; and if their felicity and graceful innocence before their fall tranſports the reader, their plaintive ſituation after it, out-ſtretched on the cold ground, is no leſs intereſting, and raiſes every ſentiment of our humanity and commiſeration. Satan and his adherents alſo, are drawn with a maſtery and elevation of genius peculiar to Milton:

" —— round he throws his baleful eyes,
That witneſs'd huge affliction and diſmay
Mix'd with obdurate pride and ſtedfaſt hate.
—His form had yet not loſt
All her original brightneſs, nor appear'd
Leſs than arch-angel ruin'd, and the exceſs
Of glory obſcur'd.

—his

—his face
Deep ſcars of thunder had entrench'd, and care
Sat on his faded cheek, but under brows
Of dauntleſs courage, and conſiderate pride
Waiting revenge: cruel his eye."—

In one word, Milton is remarkably diſtinguiſhable in the ſplendor, fertility, and dignity of his imagination; and when we conſider the fanaticiſm of the times he lived in, and the warm active part that he took in all thoſe litigious controverſies, religious as well as civil; and further, his own ſolitary ſituation, after the deſtruction of his party, hating and hated, it is no wonder if the buckler or the dagger do ſometimes make their appearance in the polemic divinity which has here and there eat its way out, in ſpots upon his work; but they are like the ſolar ſpots, loſt in the blaze of poetical luſtre that ſurrounds them.

Here it may not be unentertaining to lay before the reader a judgment that abbé Wincleman has paſſed on the genius of the Engliſh poets, and on Mil-

ton's in particular. "They are not in the wrong who ſay that the poets, on the north-ſide of the Alps, ſpeak by figures which paint but little. It muſt be really acknowledged that the ſtrange and ſometimes frightful figures, which, for the moſt part, compoſe all the grandeur of Milton, are not at all the objects of a pencil that was noble; they appear rather to be what painting would refuſe. The deſcriptions of Milton are all (with the ſingle exception of the love ſcene in Paradiſe) like Gorgons ſtrongly characterized, that reſemble each other, and always ſtrike with equal terror. The figures of many other Engliſh poets, fill the ear with a great noiſe, and preſent nothing to the mind." Hiſtoire de l'Art, &c. p. 48. This abbé Wincleman was a German antiquary, and had warmly embarked in the ſyſtem about the influence of climates; and that he was intemperate and abſurd enough to maintain any opinion, however deſperate, is as evident

evident in his encomiums (on Mr. Mengs, and on ſeveral ſtatues and baſſo relievos, in the Albani and other collections) as in his cenſures. He had read almoſt every thing, ancient and modern, as the books that he wrote ſhew, and indeed they ſhew little elſe; they are compoſed with little thought, and leſs taſte; they are a farrago of matter, Greek and Latin, good and bad, and ſeem to have been ranged in his head, as they generally are in the tails of books, alphabetically, rather than in any analytical order. However, one would have imagined, in the preſent inſtance, that he had miſtaken his man, and that he really meant Taſſo, and not Milton; for Taſſo dreſſes ou this "gods of the abyſs in hair of ſnakes, and immenſe voluminous tails; he divides them into a thouſand loathſome harpies, centaurs, ſphinxes, pale Gorgons, horrid barking Scyllas, roaring hydras, and hiſſing Pythons: Chimeras vomiting fire; Geryons, horrid Polyphemes, and new monſters ne-

ver before conceived or ſeen, confuſed mixtures of different aſpect." Even Pluto himſelf is drawn "with great horns, livid envenomed fiery eyes, a thick ſhagged beard, covering his briſtled boſom, and an envenomed mouth, opening like a deep and turbulent whirlpool of black foul blood, and, like a volcano, belching out thunders, ſulphureous ſmoke, dark breath, and a horrid ſtench." See canto iv. And yet even here the abbé Wincleman would have been abſurd and raſh in arraigning either the climate or the particular genius of the poet; for Taſſo was in this, as well as in other particulars, vitiated by the taſte of the age he lived in; he did not want the divine fire of a true poet; he has it every where, although he ſometimes miſemployed it, upon ſuch fuel as the prevailing vulgar romance, childiſh notions, threw in his way. The ſame might be ſaid of Dante, of M. Angelo, and of Rafaelle, in his picture of St. Michael, at Verſailles; they

they have painted Satan, according to the old women's conception of him, with horns and claws. But Milton's touches of character are of a nobler and more ſpiriritual kind; and indeed it is a piece of juſtice due to his ſuperior talents, to obſerve, that he was the firſt man of genius who was able to make any poetical uſe (that was not more ridiculous than ſublime) of the great perſonages and imagery of our religion: as it came to us from the Jews, who were never remarkable for art or pictureſque ideas, it had the character of that metaphyſical, abſtracted, gloomy people, ſtrongly impreſſed upon it.

Lommazo, and other old writers on the arts, have been ſomewhat too viſionary in their notions about the different important uſes to which the ſtudy of the proportions of the human body had occaſionally led; they have built many arts and ſciences upon this foundation. I am far from adopting all that they ſay upon this

head, and yet it is very remarkable, that in thoſe nations, where this ſtudy has not been cultivated, the imagination has never ſhewn itſelf without great diſorder and barbariſm. Perhaps from the uſe of this might be, in great meaſure, derived the fitneſs, propriety, laws of order, and compoſition of the poets and other artiſts of the Grecians, and of the nations who have ſince imitated them: and (what si worth the conſideration of our dealers in the influence of climate) the inhabitants of the North, although ſo different in the nature of their food and climate from the people of Paleſtine and the other Orientals, yet if we compare the tour of imagination and flighty parts of the Edda, with the Revelations and other Aſiatic productions, there will be found a very great reſemblance: there is the ſame inelegant wildneſs, and the ſame identical character of barbarous, diſorderly, and (if I may be allowed the expreſſion) Gothic monſters. I muſt beg

that

that the reader will not do me the injuſtice to ſuppoſe that any thing further is meant in this parallel between the Edda and the Revelations, or any other of our ſacred books, than ſimply to point out an external reſemblance in mere words and imagery; I meddle not with the myſteries that are underneath, and am not at all affected by the dreſs they may appear in.

But to return from our digreſſion, Milton has happily opened another mine of poetical matter, which was much wanted, as the old ones were no longer fit for uſe; his angels, his human perſonages, his devils, and even his Death, are new characters: Sin, indeed, ſmells a little of the Scylla of Homer, Virgil, and Ovid, particularly the two latter; and yet her birth, though borrowed alſo from that of Minerva's, has as much novelty, happy imagination, and beautiful propriety in its application here, as there was originally in the firſt invention. The rich fancy that prevails every where in his ſmaller

poems alſo—but we ſhould never have done; our ſubject calls us another way, and enough has been hinted to bring to every man's recollection the vigour of the Engliſh genius, where it has been allowed to exert itſelf; and more eſpecially as thoſe two authors lived at a time when the aliments of ſouthern climates (which Du Bos thinks of ſuch mighty importance) were not as common in England as they have been ſince, by the means of our more extended commerce.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

The Diſadvantage to ſuperior Art in England, in not having been taken up whilſt the Nation was forming its Character.

IT appears that until the time of Edward VI. and queen Elizabeth, that whatever little painting was practiſed in England was of a hiſtorical nature, taken from the legends of the ſaints, or from the Old and New Teſtament. Theſe were, as many as could be come at, deſtroyed, and the practice of all ſuch things interdicted for the future *. The

* Strype, in his Annals, relates a very remarkable converſation between queen Elizabeth and Dr. Symſon, dean of her majeſty's chapel. "The dean having gotten from a foreigner ſeveral fine cuts and pictures, repreſenting the ſtories and paſſions of the ſaints and martyrs, and placed them againſt the Epiſtles and Goſpels of their feſtivals, in the Common Prayer Book. And this book he had cauſed to be richly bound, and laid on the cuſhion

taſte

taſte of the public, and the labours of the artiſt, was, from this period, turned into

for the queen's uſe, in the place where ſhe commonly ſat; intending it for a new-years gift to her majeſty, and thinking to have pleaſed her fancy therewith. But it had not that effect, but the contrary. For ſhe conſidered how this varied from her late open injunctions and proclamations againſt the ſuperſtitious uſe of images in churches, and for the taking away all ſuch reliques of popery. When ſhe came to her place ſhe opened the book, and peruſed it, and ſaw the pictures, but frowned and bluſhed: and then ſhut it (of which ſeveral took notice) and calling the verger, bad him bring her the old book, wherein ſhe was formerly wont to read. After ſermon, whereas ſhe was wont to get immediately on horſeback, or into her chariot, ſhe went ſtrait to the veſtry, and applying herſelf to the dean, thus ſhe ſpoke. Q. Mr. Dean, how came it to paſs that a new Service Book was placed on my cuſhion? To which the dean anſwered, May it pleaſe your majeſty, I cauſed it to be placed there. Then ſaid the queen, Wherefore did you ſo? D. To preſent your majeſty with a new-year's gift. Q. You could never preſent me with a worſe. D. Why ſo, madam? Q. You know I have an averſion to idolatry, to images, and pictures of this kind. D. Wherein is the idolatry, may it pleaſe your majeſty? Q. In the cuts reſembling angels and ſaints; nay, groſſer abſurdities, pictures reſembling

the

a new chanel, and has ſpent itſelf upon portraits, landſcapes, and other inani-

the Bleſſed Trinity. D. I meant no harm: nor did I think it would offend your majeſty, when I intended it for a new-year's gift. Q. You muſt needs be ignorant then. Have you forgot our proclamation againſt images, pictures, and Romiſh reliques, in the churches? Was it not read in your deanry? D. It was read. But be your majeſty aſſured, I meant no harm, when I cauſed the cuts to be bound with the Service Book. Q. You muſt needs be very ignorant to do this after our prohibition of them. D. It being my ignorance, your majeſty may the better pardon me. Q. I am ſorry for it, yet glad to hear it was your ignorance, rather than your opinion. D. Be your majeſty aſſured it was my ignorance. Q. If ſo, Mr. Dean, God grant you his ſpirit, and more wiſdom for the future. D. Amen, I pray God. Q. I pray, Mr. Dean, how came you by theſe pictures? who engraved them? D. I know not who engraved them. I bought them. Q. From whom bought you them? D. From a German. Q. It is well it was from a ſtranger. Had it been any of *our ſubjects*, we ſhould have queſtioned the matter. Pray let no more of theſe miſtakes, or of this kind, be committed within the churches of our realm for the future. D. There ſhall not. This matter occaſioned all the clergy, in and about London, and the church-wardens of each pariſh, to

ſearch

mate matters, in which the human mind, and conſequently the genius of the artiſts, if there was any, had little or nothing to employ itſelf upon: ſo that hiſtorical painting was proſcribed juſt at the time we were going to receive the qualifications that would have enabled us to ſuceed in it; at the time when Spenſer, Fairfax, and numbers of other ingenious men, were cultivating and gathering in knowledge of all kinds, ancient and foreign; and when lord Bacon, like another Columbus, was leading us to the diſcovery of new worlds in the regions of knowledge.

It is a misfortune, never entirely to be retrieved, that painting was not ſuffered to grow up amongſt us, at the ſame time with poetry and the other arts and ſciences, whilſt the genius of the nation

ſearch their churches and chapels; and cauſed them to waſh out of the walls all paintings that ſeemed to be Romiſh and idolatrous, and in lieu thereof ſuitable texts, taken out of the Holy Scriptures, to be written.

was yet forming its character in ſtrength, beauty, and refinement; it would then have received a ſtrength and a poliſh; and it would, in its turn, have given to our poetry a greater perfection in one of its maſter features, in which (Milton and Spenſer excepted) it is rather ſomewhat defective. But the nation is now formed, and perhaps more than formed; and there is cauſe to fear that it may be too late to expect the laſt degree of perfection in the arts, from what we are now likely to produce, in an age when perhaps frothy affectations and modiſh, corrupt, ſilly opinions, of foreign as well as of domeſtic growth, have but too generally taken place of that maſculine vigour and purity of taſte, ſo neceſſary both for the artiſt and for his employer. Let us ſuppoſe ever ſo many fortunate circumſtances to concur in leading an artiſt into ſuch a track of ſtudy, amongſt old ſtones and old canvaſs, as that he may be enabled to aſſimilate this pure, rigid, beautiful, ſimple

taſte

taſte of the Greeks and the old Italians, with his own ſubſtance and obſervations on nature; yet afterwards if he ſhould unfortunately happen to find that the æra of thoſe qualities has either not arrived, or is long ſince paſſed away, amongſt the people who are (generally ſpeaking) to be his employers, and that they have but little of that grandeur of idea and elevation of mind, that will encourage him in the purſuit of extraordinary things, what is he then to do? his great advantages, over meaner artiſts will infallibly lie by, mouldring away through diſuſe, and he muſt content himſelf with a conteſt of little value, mere matters of execution, who has the richeſt colours, who makes the moſt like pictures, and ſo forth.

There was, about thirty years ago, a ſhocking inſtance of this, when Mr. Huſſey, after much vexatious ſtruggling, retired with diſguſt from an art in which no man was ever better qualified to ſucceed; he actually had talents which would

would have done honour to the beſt ages of Greece or Italy. The purity and elegance of his taſte, his deep knowledge of all the parts which compoſe the human figure, and the remarkable fidelity and preciſion of his drawing ought to have gained him patrons, friends, and admirers, and would have done it in any other country of the world. But though this man was neither fit for the age, nor the age for him, yet I am hardly able to divine how it was poſſible for the wretched dabblers, his cotemporaries, to ſap and ruin the credit of ſuch a character, and (if I may be allowed to ſay ſo) to cheat the country out of the uſe and honour of it. He was, indeed, unfortunately called out of Italy before he had completed his ſcheme of art, by a ſtudy of colouring, and a practice of the pencil, adequate to his other excellencies. But notwithſtanding all, his Ariadne, at Northumberland houſe, is, even in this reſpect, not inferior to his cotemporaries, whilſt I am not afraid to

ſay

ſay that in every other, it would be difficult to find any figure ſuperior to it, in the beſt productions of the beſt age of Italy. Had he gone on from ſuch a beginning, vigorouſly purſuing his practice and giving birth to his fancy, what might not the nation have expected by this time? for the man, as I am told, is ſtill alive. It were much to be wiſhed that this may be the laſt ſacrifice of the kind; but if it ſhould not, and if we have actually miſſed the proper time for a proſecution of art, and are now too far gone in corruption and giddy folly to admit of any great and ſerious exertions, I will then beg leave to enter this as a caveat in favour of our climate.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

The Diſadvantage to the ſmaller Branches in being diſjoined from the great Stock of Hiſtorical Art.

IT is a vaſt advantage to every individual art, dependent upon deſign, that they all exiſt and are carried on together, hand in hand, forming that harmonious concert of the Muſes and the Graces, ſo beautifully alluded to by Homer and Pindar. Theſe arts reflect many lights for the advancement of one another; and they afford many correctives for the vices, either of exceſs or deficiency, which the artiſts of each department are liable to, when left to themſelves. "Let it be always remembered, (ſays Bacon) that all partitions of knowledge be accepted rather as lines and veins, than for ſections and ſeparations; and that the continuance and entireneſs of knowledge be preſerved. For the contrary hereof hath made many

particular ſciences become barren, ſhallow, and erroneous, while they have not been nouriſhed and maintained from the common fountain." This has been remarkably our caſe in the inferior branches of painting, that, until very lately, have had a vogue amongſt us. Portraits of ourſelves, of our horſes, our dogs, and country ſeats: being attached to little things, we came naturally to admire and to over-rate the little men who ſucceeded in them; one admirer builds upon the admiration of another, until this molehill grows up into a mountain and bounds our proſpect. Let it be always underſtood that I ſpeak not againſt the art; there is no part of it trifling or mean in itſelf, it only becomes ſo when it gets into the hands of men of contracted powers, who debaſe thoſe things by ſeparating of them from the noble qualities which ſhould ſupport and make them of conſequence.

The ſtudy of hiſtory, large and of a noble character, is what ſhould have led the

the way to all things; and there is ſpace enough for it in our churches, which appear like fops, overloaded with gaudineſs and ornament on the outſide, whilſt the interior lies neglected and empty; nay, what hinders that even in our houſes ſomething of this might not be brought about. It is a vulgar error that our rooms are not ſufficiently capacious; it is our minds that want expanſion: if theſe could be brought to a noble ſize, there would be found ſpace enough for great works in our apartments. The grand figures of the Carraches, in the Magnani and Farneſe galleries, do not occupy more wall, than we beſtow upon the very expenſive Flemiſh, Dutch, and other trifles, piled, one over another, in many of our rooms. Every one, to be ſure, may do as he pleaſes in his own houſe; but let me be permitted to obſerve here, that, the excellence and power of the art would never have been felt, and the Vatican

would have wanted its fame, if M. Angelo and Rafaele had painted only pigmy figures, and upon ſcraps of canvaſs: but their employers were men of too great minds to require ſuch an abſurdity, ſuch a maiming of the art; indeed an elevation of ſoul ſeems to have been the general characteriſtic of that age, for even the houſe of Agoſtino Ghigi, (the little Farneſe, where Rafaele painted his Galatea, and Cupid and Pſyche) is one of the nobleſt ornaments of Rome, though himſelf was nothing more than a Sienna merchant.

Hiſtory painting and ſculpture ſhould be the main views of any people deſirous of gaining honour by the arts. Theſe are the teſts by which the national character will be tried in after ages, and by which it has been, and is now, tried by the natives of other countries. Theſe are the great ſources from whence all the rivulets of art flow, and from whence only is derived the vigour and character par-

that truly enobles them. To this is owing the peculiar excellence diſcoverable in the portraits of Titian, of Rafaelle, of Seb. del Piombo, Rubens, Vandyke, and many others; and Nicolo Pouſſin is alone proof ſufficient, what conſequence and dignity might be introduced into landſcape, when it gets into the hands of a man whoſe views are not confined to narrow limits. Indeed an artiſt ought always to be in poſſeſſion of more than his ſubjects call for, or infallibly he will not have what it calls for.

The prime object of ſtudy to a hiſtory-painter being the entire man, body and mind, he can occaſionally confine himſelf to any part of this ſubject, and carry a meaning, a dignity, and a propriety into his work, which a mere portrait-painter muſt be a ſtranger to, who has generally no ideas of looking further than the likeneſs and in its moments of ſtill life. As to the notion that a portrait-painter can alſo, when called upon, paint hiſtory, and that

he can, merely from his acquaintance with the map of the face, travel with ſecurity over the other regions of the body, every part of which has a peculiar and difficult geography of its own; this would be too palpably abſurd to need any refutation. He may indeed, by reading and converſation, borrow, collect, or ſteal opinions, and he may make out general theories; but even in the way of theory what he mixes of his own head will be at beſt looſe and vague, as it cannot be confirmed by the reſult of his own obſervations, from repeated and familiar practice. It is eaſy to collect elogiums upon M. Angelo, and the other great fathers of hiſtorical excellence, but we ought to be careful how we add to them. I repeat this on account of a wild opinion which has got into circulation, and muſt be attended with very miſchievous conſequences, ſhould any young artiſt regulate his practice by it. The opinion is, that the grand ſtyle, and an attention to

exactneſs

exactneſs in the minuter parts of the figure are incompatible, and that neither of them can be obtained but at the expence of the other; and M. Angelo is miſtakenly held out as the example of a ſtyle of art, conſiſting of all genius and ſoul, and which was above attending to an exactneſs, in the minutiæ and detail of his figures. This is falſe both in the precept and in the example. M. Angelo is, of all men, one of the moſt remarkable for this preciſion, and this attention to the detail or ſmaller parts of his figures: there is actually more work and making out (as the artiſts call it) in one arm or leg, executed by this great man, than is to be found in two entire figures of any of thoſe vague ſlovengly theoriſts, (for what they do can hardly be conſidered as practice.) There is ſcarcely a joncture or a muſcle in the human body, that is not either firmly marked, or delicately hinted at, according to the character he meant to repreſent; and there are many of his

drawings to be met with, where he even firſt built the ſkeleton and afterwards drew over it the muſcles and the ſkin. His Moſes, his Chriſt, his figures at Florence, and alſo the Greek ſtatues, what are we to think of them? Is not the Apollo a ſublime figure? and yet all the parts of it are finiſhed with the accuracy of a gem. The Laocoon alſo is as much made out, in all the component parts, from the head to the foot, as it is poſſible for a figure to be. This great attention to the particular parts, was the principal reaſon why the great artiſts were always fond of making their figures naked, whenever they could do it with propriety; nay, they even ſometimes ſacrificed propriety to obtain it, as it afforded them an ample field to diſplay the higheſt abilites, and where a common capacity muſt certainly looſe its way. If you cover with drapery the ſwelled thorax, and the writhing convulſions of the muſcles of the abdomen, and that agony which

which is diffuſed all over all the parts of the legs and the arm of Laocoon; the attitude, no doubt, ſtill remains, and the ſtory is carried on, but every difficulty (both in the choice and preciſion of form, and the agitation that is ſuperadded to it) which required ſuperior knowledge and ſkill to execute, is by this means taken away, and any vulgar artiſt will be equal to the taſk of making his agonized foot, if you allow him to put a ſhoe upon it. All the peculiar graces and beautiful ſelection of parts in the Apollo vaniſh if you cover him with a drapery, he will then differ but little from any other tall man. The Hercules and the fighting Gladiator, if they are clad, all is gone that the world has been ſo long admiring in them.

It may anſwer the convenient purpoſes of inability to inſinuate, that this attention to particular parts is an affected diſplay of knowledge, and a boaſtful oſtentation: but this is naturally to be expected;

expected; we can all of us be eloquent enough in declaiming upon the depravity or miſuſe of ſuch matters as happen to lie out of our reach. In a word, it was this very attention to all the parts of which a figure is compoſed, that gave the great artiſts ſuch a fondneſs for the naked: and the Grecian taſte, and that of M. Angelo, ſo far agree with the Dutch taſte, that the forms they executed were equally made out with ſtudy, attention, and accuracy; the difference is that they were not equally well choſen.

Many portrait-painters make but little account of anatomy, drawing, and knowledge of the naked, &c. which they ſay are never to be ſeen in portraits. Suppoſe we ſhould grant them this, yet we muſt inſiſt that neither ſhould the want of thoſe ſciences be ſeen: what would become of many pictures were we to ſtrip them of their loaded colours, their ſhadows, and the rags in which they are ſo carefully wrapt up, with the head ſet ill upon the

the neck, the neck as ill upon the ſhoulders, arms growing out of their places, out of the back, or out of the breaſts, too long, too ſhort, too ſtreight, or too crooked? how would ſuch pictures look were they converted into ſtatues, and all their ſerviceable blinds and obſcurities vaniſhed? Let us carry this remark further off, and apply it to hiſtorical painting; even Rubens, though very reſpectable in many other things, yet, with regard to his forms, what figure would they make were they converted into marble? his flabbineſs, guts, and deformities, could not be endured: let us try Joardans and Rembrandt by the ſame rule. What would the ancient Greeks ſay of ſuch ſtatues? What opinion would M. Angelo and Rafaelle have had of them? The ſtructure and articulation of the bones, their movement by the muſcles, the variations of form that theſe muſcles, by their action and inaction, give to each member, the juſt relation that theſe members

members bear to one another, and the ſelection neceſſary to adapt them to that peculiar character the ſubject requires, are all of them equally common to painting and ſculpture. A want of power to execute any of theſe very difficult and very eſſential particulars, cannot be ſo well concealed by the ſtatuary, though it is often blurred over, or hid from the ſight, by intervening objects, or by artificial obſcurities and other low tricks, in frequent uſe amongſt ſome gentlemen of the pencil; for painting alſo is not without its helps and reſources for ſmatterers, and its arts of being deep learned and ſhallow read.

Inſtead of expanding our minds ſo as to take in ſuch an enlarged noble idea of art as was worthy a great and learned nation; our practice, until lately, has been rather to contract the art itſelf, to ſplit it into pieces, and to portion it out into ſmall lots, fitted to the narrow capacities of mechanical uneducated people. We

have looked upon the arts, as we do upon trades, which may be carried on ſeparately, and in which ſeven years apprenticeſhip was the beſt title. After what Horace has ſo long ago pronounced about the inutility of genius without learning, it is ſurpriſing how it could ſo univerſally enter into the heads of our people, that an illiterate man could make any thing of true art. Labour and induſtry might give him ſucceſs in the mechanical modes of working; but where is he to turn himſelf to, for the acquiſition of that comprehenſive thought, that neceſſary knowledge of all the parts of his ſtory, and the characters who act in it; that power of inventing and adding to it, and that judgment of making the old and new matter conſiſtent and of one embodied ſubſtance. Perhaps it may be here objected that many of the old Italians, who have obtained a conſiderable character in the arts, were men of very little learning; this is true, but

not

notat all to the purpoſe ; for the ſubjects they painted or carved, required little more than was within the reach of vulgar education; and when ſtatues and pictures of Madonnas, S. Giuſeppes, and legendary viſions are calculated for the meridian of London, it will be true again. But the real or poetical hiſtories of ancient times (which happen to be more in vogue at preſent) require a conſiderable ſhare of learning, if an artiſt means to enter into the marrow of his ſubject : his learned employer may indeed occaſionally give him a ſtory to execute, but can he alſo give him, occaſionally the capacity of conceiving it as he ought ?

Thus the education, indiſpenſibly neceſſary to give perfection in the great walk of the arts, is twofold. One part of it conſiſts in obtaining at leaſt a thorough knowledge of the human form, and a power of delineating it in all its parts, and in all the variety of actions and paſſions, which thoſe parts are capable

pable of expreſſing. The other branch of this education, takes in a knowledge of the hiſtory, the peculiar characters, manners, and cuſtoms of men, in thoſe periods of time, and thoſe actions upon which the artiſt is to be employed; and theſe various actions, manners, characters, features, and proportions, admit of a ſelection afterwards, in which the genius, taſte, and judgment, have ample ſpace for the diſplay of thoſe powers which are to ſtamp a value upon this truth.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Of the Public Encouragement.

WHEN we reflect upon the great variety of uſeful inſtitutions, which do ſo much honour to the public virtue of this country, it is really a matter of ſurprize that the arts only ſhould have lain ſo long unheeded, and that no means have been yet deviſed, of extricating hiſtorical painting out of the confuſed maſs of meaner arts with which it is indiſcriminately jumbled. The members of the Royal Academy, conſcious of the neceſſity of making ſome effort of this kind, did, with the conſent of the dean and chapter, ſelect ſix painters to execute each a large picture of Scripture-hiſtory, which he had the liberty of preſenting to the cathedral of St. Paul: but obſtacles aroſe which prevented its taking effect. Some time after this, the ſociety for

for the encouragement of Arts and Manufactures formed another plan of placing hiſtorical pictures, of the moſt eminent native artiſts, in their new room at the Adelphi; they elected, for this purpoſe, the former ſix ſelected members of the Royal Academy, to whom they added four others. The deſign of this plan was every way worthy of that ſociety, which had been, in great meaſure, the nurſe of national art. It would have afforded an equitable diſplay of whatever abilities thoſe artiſts were in poſſeſſion of, as they were to be ranged ſide by ſide, without any intervening pictures of landſcape, portraits, fiſh, dogs, or other diſſimilar ſubjects, which, in our annual exhibitions, are ſometimes ſo introduced as to diſtract the eye, and in a great meaſure to take away the opportunity of forming any well digeſted comparative judgments, during the ſhort time of their expoſition. But this excellent plan, (which

is ſo much wanting) from ſome defect in the manner of it, went off in ſmoke like the other. There is however great reaſon to hope that ſomething will yet be done, and that amongſt all our different ſocieties of connoiſſeurs, dilettanti, colleges, corporations, and pariſhes, a noble public ſpirit will ſomewhere ſtep forward, eſpecially as it may be brought about with very little expence.

There is to be ſure but few artiſts whoſe perſonal intereſts happen to be embarked in the ſame bottom with the dignity of the art, and conſequently with the intereſt and wiſhes of the public: but there is a few, and as to the many who can have no part in this exertion of ſuperior art, they ought in conſcience to content themſelves with thoſe greater profits which in this commercial country muſt ever follow from the practice of the lower branches, eſpecially as they cannot expect to keep up for ever, that falſe

weight

weight and importance which they have aſſumed in conſequence of thoſe greater gettings ; for the public ignorance of theſe arts, behind which they have been hitherto entrenched, is much battered and ſhaken, and now lets in the light at many places. It is therefore to be hoped that they will no longer find it practicable to play the part of the dog in the manger, as they have hitherto done; for indeed a great many of the blocks and impediments that were thrown in the way of ſuperior art, have been greatly owing to the ſecret workings and machinations of theſe intereſted men: and, if they can do nothing elſe, they will at leaſt endeavour to turn the attention of dilettanti towards the breeding up of hiſtory-painters for the next age, in hopes to prevent the neceſſary means of exertion being given to the preſent hiſtorical artiſts: and I will with plainneſs and freedom again repeat it, that any public ſpirited man or men,

who may wiſh to put forth a hand towards the calling out of hiſtorical-painting amongſt us, ought for every reaſon, to pay no manner of regard to the counſels and inſinuations of thoſe artiſts who can have no part in this exertion.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Some Errors in the preſent State of Connoiſſeurſhip.

THERE is in our preſent ſtate of connoiſſeurſhip ſuch an extreme degree of weakneſs, that almoſt any fraud or folly will go down: the number of our dilettanti is, no doubt, much encreaſed of late years, but the ſilly talk and miſtaken judgments about pictures has encreaſed alſo, and out of all reaſonable proportion. Our dilettanti and picture collectors (for the moſt part) miſemploy the little time they beſtow upon the arts, in the purſuit of a long liſt of names and trifling anecdotes of Flemiſh, Dutch, or obſcure Italian artiſts: they value themſelves upon their diſcernment in diſtinguiſhing the different ſtyles, manners, touches, and tints of the maſters as they call them. Something of this kind

of knowledge an artiſt unavoidably acquires in copying old pictures and ſearching after the mechanic of his profeſſion, but it is a labrynth to any body elſe, and even ſometimes to the artiſt himſelf *. Nothing can be more propoſterous than for men of ſenſe and education, out of the art, to loſe their time about it; they can at beſt arrive at nothing higher than to be a kind of velites, or light armed troops, attendant on the body of mere practical low artiſts, who, without controverſy, are the worſt judges in the world of any work that riſes above their habitual confined modes of thinking. Painters of beaſts, oyſters, &c. if they imprudently chuſe to give their opinion of higher matters, muſt naturally beſtow the palm upon that ſtyle of art, choice of objects, and arrangement of ideas, which approach neareſt to their own favorite purſuits: the vanity that carries the cobler beyond his laſt, carries

* Vaſari in his life of An. del Sarto.

him]

him beyond his judgment. Whilſt many of our dilettanti are thus eagerly purſuing a piece of inſignificant and dangerous knowledge, (as it expoſes them to fraud and impoſition) and which it is impoſſible for them ever to obtain in half the degree that it is poſſeſſed by a common workman; they neglect advantages that their ſuperior education offers, which, if cultivated with the ſame pains, would infallibly put them in poſſeſſion of a real taſte, and of ſuch a diſcernment in higher matters as muſt do honour to themſelves, and be highly uſeful to the arts: they would then be a happy check upon that over-fondneſs of mechanical excellence which naturally grows up amongſt the artiſts; they would put them in mind of weightier matters than the tythes of mint and cummin; they would require of them the nobler flights of dignity, elegance, poetical fancy, knowledge, and judgment.

Such connoiſſeurs I have met with; men of capacious minds, who, though by no means inattentive to the mechanical excellencies, do yet pay their chief regard to the ſoul and ſubſtance of the art, and are not only qualified to follow an artiſt in the nobleſt flights of his profeſſion, but alſo to lead him into them. Theſe men are rarely to be met with, at leaſt it has been my fortune to ſee but a very few; it may be, however, that they are more numerous than I am aware of, as (to confeſs the truth) the extent of my acquaintance is indeed very limited.

Here it may be proper to take notice of the prejudice that many people have to naked figures, as indecent and tending to lewdneſs. It is difficult to diſcover any ſettled rules of propriety and decency in the different modes of dreſs, as all ages and nations have been extremely fluctuating and repugnant in their notions of this matter, ſometimes allowing a

greater and ſometimes a leſs portion of the body to diſcover itſelf; for example, a Dutchman muſt be invelloped with a multitude of breeches, and an old Roman, or a Scotſman, is content with a ſhort petticoat; and in the days of queen Beſs, modeſty required that nothing ſhould be ſeen of the fair ſex but the noſe and the tips of the fingers, all the reſt of the body being walled in, ſo as that neither joint or limb was traceable: but happily at preſent modeſty makes no ſuch ſulky and unreaſonable demands. I ſhall not therefore attempt to determine the colour of this camelion, eſpecially as we can come more directly to the merits of the queſtion by examining a few of the naked figures themſelves.

The Greek ſtatues of the Laocoon, Apollo, Melegar of the Belvedere, Hercules, the fighting and the dying Gladiator, and the Venus of Medicis, though altogether naked, yet ſurely there is nothing in them offenſive to modeſty; there

is

is nothing depraved or immoral: and I could mention many others, even of a more modern date. Looking on theſe figures the mind of the ſpectator is taken up with the ſurpriſing beauty or ſublimity of the perſonage, his great ſtrength, vigorous and manly character, or with thoſe pains and agonies that ſo feelingly diſcover themſelves throughout the whole work. It is not on ſhewing or concealing the naked, that modeſty or lewdneſs depend; they ariſe entirely from the choice and intentions of the artiſt himſelf: a great mind can raiſe great and virtuous ideas, though he ſhews all the parts of the body in their natural way; whilſt the Cheapſide prints of the Buck and Quaker Girl, the Charms of the Garter and of the High Wind, are proofs that very lewd ideas might be produced, though little or nothing of the naked be diſcovered; and there is no doubt but that the Venus of Medicis might be converted into a very lewd figure by dreſſing her

her out, for that purpoſe: half a breaſt, or the diſcovery of a leg, with other little adjuncts, could not fail of ſucceſs, if the ſpectator was diſpoſed that way. Some time ago, when I was with ſome of our travelling gentlemen running over the Borgheſi collection, at Rome, where there is a picture of the entombing of Chriſt, by Rafaelle, one of our company took occaſion to make a ſtring of very lewd buffoon remarks upon the belly, the legs, and the linen, which covered the other parts of the Chriſt; but all this immorality and indecency exiſted in his own mind, and not in the picture; which, to a perſon of a different turn of thinking, would have appeared a very moving and affecting compoſition. It is worth obſerving alſo, that many of the fair ſex do ſometimes betray themſelves, and diſcover what they would wiſh to conceal, by their affected ſqueamiſhneſs and over delicacy in this reſpect. The Greeks, and other great deſigners, as we have obſerved

ſerved before, gave into this practice of the naked, in order to ſhew, in its full extent, the idea of character they meant to eſtabliſh: if it was beauty, they ſhew it to you in all the limbs; ſtrength, the ſame; and the agonies of the Laocoon are as diſcernible in his foot as in his face. This naked nature, or but thinly and partially clad, ſpeaks a univerſal language, which is underſtood and valued in all times and countries, when the Grecian dreſs, language, and manners, are neither regarded or known.

There is another piece of ridiculous nicety, obſervable in our age and nation, which better times have been ſtrangers to; we affect ſuch nice feelings and ſo much ſenſibility, as not to be able to bear the ſight of pictures where the action turns upon any circumſtance of diſtreſs; we have ſuch extreme good-nature as to turn off with diſguſt from the whole claſs of affecting ſubjects that agitate and call forth our feeling for the diſtreſſes

of

of our ſpecies, and which the wiſeſt nations have ever regarded, as the nobleſt, moſt uſeful, and moſt intereſting ſubjects, both for painting and poetry: we miſtake groſsly in this matter; the beſt natured people are the furtheſt from being diſguſted with ſuch ſubjects; and this is ſo known and ſo decided a truth, that many excellent writers, from Ariſtotle down to our own times, have endeavoured to explain and account for the ſatisfaction aud melancholly pleaſure the mind receives in ſuch tragical repreſentations. Whot hat has ever ſeen the expiring Laocoon and his children, the plague of Pouſſin, the death of Ananias by Rafaelle, the poſſeſſed boy by Domenichino, the Converſion of S. Bruno by Le Sueur, or even the S. Cecilia by Maderna; what perſon, of fine feelings, has ever beheld theſe, and many other ſimilar pictures, without an extreme pleaſure? I am aſhamed to be obliged to combat

combat ſuch ſilly affectations, they are beneath men who have either head or heart; they are unworthy of women, who have either education or ſimplicity of manners; they would diſgrace even waiting-maids and ſentimental milliners.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

Temperate Climates the peculiar Theatre of moral Influence.

IT is eaſy to conceive that no ſpecies of religion, government, opinion, or moral cauſe whatever, can make any material alterations in the people of countries ſituate in an extreme degree of heat or cold. When the earth and its various productions lie for the greateſt part of the year buried under ſnow and ice, the wretched inhabitant, thus fettered up, will find it taſk ſufficient to ſcreen hinſelf from the ſcowling winds, and to procure a miſerable ſuſtenance. On the other hand, " when the heat of the climate is ſo exceſſive as to deprive the body of all vigour and ſtrength, then the faintneſs is communicated to the mind; there is no curioſity, no noble enterprize, no generous ſentiment; the inclinations are all paſſive; indolence

conſtitutes the utmoſt happineſs, ſcarcely any puniſhment is ſo ſevere as the action of the ſoul, and ſlavery is more ſupportable than the force and vigour of mind neceſſary for human action *."

The influence of ſuch climates is certain and without remedy; not that I would infer that the nature of man is altered or impaired, either in the quality, or in the number of his bodily or mental faculties: but it comes to the ſame thing, as theſe capabilities are not ſuffered to exert themſelves ſufficiently, and are confined to a narrow ſphere of action, and but to a few objects. There can be no vigorous applications, no long watchings, nothing of that progreſſive and accumulated experience of ages and generations linked together, which is ſo indiſpenſibly neceſſary for the perfection of ſcience; and therefore in whatever proportion men are debarred the exerciſe of thoſe faculties which produce works of genius, ſo

* Spirit of Laws, B. xiv. ch. 2.

far

far they may be ſaid (though improperly) to want genius. It requires no great ſtretch of capacity to diſcover, that ſuch climates can be no promiſing ſoil for the fine arts, and that in proportion as we remove from theſe extremes, we are the leſs affected by their inconveniencies; ſo far is certain, and it were well if many of our philoſophers had reſtrained themſelves from going farther, as nobody doubts but that phyſical cauſes will in ſuch countries put the moral cauſes in motion, and in great meaſure circumſcribe and determine the quality and extent of their combinations. But all ſuch general reaſonings upon ſcales of latitude are very ſhort, inadequate, and fallacious, when we approach the mediate or temperate climates which are more peculiarly the theatre of moral influence, and which by the accidental ſituations of mountains, plains, continents, iſlands, and winds, are counteracted ſo powerfully as to occaſion

infinite differences in the degrees of temperature in the ſame degree of latitude.

In temperate climates, where the mind and body have liberty to employ themſelves, and where commerce, war, and curioſity keep up an intercourſe between nations; ignorance, knowledge, modes, cuſtoms, religion, politics, arts, and opinions of every kind muſt in different times be variouſly affected, when we conſider the ſtate of improvement, or of abuſe and corruption, in any of thoſe particulars, how far theſe ſciences happen to be coetaneous in their exiſtence and in their progreſs, how far they happen to be united or diſunited, how far induſtry or diſſipation happens to prevail, and alſo how far they are influenced by the peculiar paſſions and fortune of leading men: when the intricacy and complication of theſe matters, and the extreme difficulty of aſcertaining the degrees of their influences in all the combinations

binations and ſucceſſions of combinations are fairly conſidered, they become to all the purpoſes of human enquiry accidental and arbitrary. It is therefore no wonder that adventurous, though ingenious men, are ſo liable to ſtumble amidſt ſo much darkneſs, eſpecially when they go without the clue of even the few facts that might have been poſſibly come at.

CHAP. XIV.

On national Taſte, Character and Manners, and their Changes in temperate Climates.

IT is out of this great maſs, that the national taſte, character, and manners ariſe. What we call the taſte of the age, is the peculiar ſtyle and complexion of this national maſs, for the time being: it fluctuates and generates with more or leſs facility and ſucceſs; and is good or bad, rude or poliſhed, limited or extended, according to the different ſtates of this maſs in its different modes of combination. A work of genius is therefore a complex object, and its merit and demerit depends upon the taſte of the age; and upon the quantity and degree of this taſte, that falls in the way of the artiſt, as well as upon the degree of active mental vigour or genius with which it is wrought: hence it is that the ſame active

tive principle or genius ſhall always appear different from the different matter or degrees of matter that it employs, as the ſame identical maſs of materials is never to be found in any two countries, or in any two ages of the ſame country, nor is the ſame portion and view of it preſented to any two men of the ſame age. When an active mind or genius finds this maſs in a healthful flouriſhing ſtate, he leads it on to maturity; but when it has paſſed its point of perfection, and is corrupting and tending to affectations, the ſame active vigour and genius will ſtill move forward, and work as effectually in the deſtruction and poiſoning of it, as it had done before in its nurture and cultivation: hence it produces fine genius, elegance, taſte, and grandeur in M. Angelo, Rafaelle, and Palladio; and bluſtering, extravagance, or inſipidity, in Bernini, Ruſconi, Borromini, and others: hence alſo the difference between Pouſſin, Le Sueur,

Le Brun, and Boucher and the modern French; hence the difference between Taſſo and Virgil. The heat and activity of mind is the ſame, but the education and maſs of materials was very different; the one was more fortunate, but the other had not leſs genius.

When writers are unacquainted with the ſtate of theſe co-operating facts, which facilitate or retard, or give being or deſtruction to the arts in each country and in each period; they may torture their ingenuity to ſupply the want of this neceſſary knowledge, they may deviſe expedients to conceal their ignorance, and to enable them to talk much though they ſay nothing; but they cannot ſolve difficulties, it is as much as they can hope to ſave appearances. Many of their theories puts one in mind of forged prophecies, where the predictions, by being poſterior to the events, are accommodated and made to tally with exactneſs. But as theſe pretended

tended deductions from climate are only built upon an accidental train of events, they are contradicted and overſet by a ſucceeding chain of events, altogether differently diſpoſed. Indeed (as was obſerved before), no people can ever be twice in exactly the ſame ſituation, therefore if we were to fix upon any point of time, and deduce the prevailing manners and taſte of that time, as the neceſſary conſequences of their climate, ſuch a deduction would be eternally irreconcileable with our experience of the earlier and later periods in the ſame country.

CHAP. XV.

The Changes in the Taſte and Character of the Italians not to be accounted for by the ſuppoſed Changes of Climate.

ABBE du Bos, in order to evade this difficulty, would have us believe that theſe changes in the taſte of a country, take place in conſequence of changes that have been actually brought about in the climate, aliments, &c. let us attend a little to what he ſays. "There has been ſuch a prodigious change in the air of Rome and the adjacent country, ſince the time of the Cæſars, that it is not at all aſtoniſhing there ſhould be a difference between the preſent and ancient inhabitants: nay, in our ſyſtem, this is the very thing that ought naturally to have happened, ſince the alteration of the cauſe muſt be always ſuppoſed to alter the effect." Page 206. This he attributes to the ruined ſtate of the Cloacæ,

cæ, to the action of the ſun upon the confined air and ſtagnant water under the ſurface of modern Rome, ſince the devaſtations of the Goths, &c. If theſe changes of climate were neceſſary in order to have occaſioned the difference of taſte and manners between the old Romans and the preſent natives, what is there to account for the vaſt difference we find between the preſent Romans, Florentines, and Bologneſe, and the inhabitants of the ſame cities only two hundred and fifty years ago: their taſte in the arts was then as vigorous, learned, and elegant, as it is now weak, frothy, inſipid, affected, and worthleſs. Therefore, either theſe two different taſtes do not depend upon the climate, or there ought to have happened great changes of climate within this ſpace of time, which has not been the caſe, the change having taken place long before; there are no two climates in Europe can differ more eſſentially than the taſte of thoſe

two

two periods, there is the difference of heaven and earth between them. The French at preſent are actually in the ſame, or a worſe ſituation. If my ſubject did not compel me to it, I would gladly have avoided mentioning theſe diſagreeable facts, as even the very appearance of retaliation, triumph, or inſult, would be hateful to me. This decay and corruption of the arts in Italy and France is owing to the inevitable courſe of things, to the inſenſible and general corruption of the public education. Vaſari has long ago obſerved, "La natura di queſta arte, "ſimile a quella del altre, che come i "corpi humani, hanno, il naſcere, il creſ-"cere, lo invecchiare & il morire*." So that although the arts in thoſe countries are really between the two laſt ſtages of this remark, yet the genius of their artiſts is not chargeable with it; eſpecially when we conſider, how very dif-

* Pag. 60.

ficult

ficult, not to ſay impoſſible, it is for a painter to get himſelf completely out of this vortex of national education, and alſo how very dangerous it would be; for I have known inſtances of young French artiſts, who by their ſtudies in Italy after M. Angelo, Rafaelle, &c. had imbibed much of the true taſte, which on their return home they were obliged to quit, and adopt that of Watteau, Boucher, &c. in order to get a livelihood. This is even ſtill more obſervable amongſt the Italians; and ſome of their artiſts, for whom I have great reſpect and friendſhip, have often lamented it to me. We muſt not, however, forget to obſerve here, that ſculpture in France is, from the rigid nature of its materials, much reſtrained from this giddineſs and flutter which has infected painting.

But to return to our remarks on the Abbé du Bos: he farther proves, from the Roman Annals, and from Horace and Juvenal, that the climate of Rome

was

was much colder than it is at preſent; and that in the year of Rome 480, the winter was ſo extremely cold, that the trees were killed with the froſt, and that the Tyber uſed frequently to be frozen over. If the learned abbé had not been quite infatuated with his ſyſtem, this very inſtance of his own would have opened his eyes. This extreme coldneſs of Rome had no effect upon the genius of Lucretius, Cicero, Virgil, and Horace; and now that it is quite changed, and is, as he obſerves, "impregnated with infectious vapours, which, during the three hot months, throws even the natives into ſuch a ſtate of languor and wearineſs, as is almoſt incredible to thoſe who have not ſeen it." And yet our abbé forgot that in the midſt of all this, Rafaelle, and the other geniuſes, made their appearance; and the Vatican, the Ghigi, and the Farneſe palaces were painted upon the banks of this very Tyber, which was now no more ſubject to be frozen over than the Nile at

Grand

Grand Cairo. So that this ſyſtem is equally unimportant and falſe, whether there was an accidental change of climate, as at Rome from the time of the Cæſars to the ſixteenth century; or whether there was no change, as at Florence and Bologna, or at Rome for theſe five hundred years paſt.

How does this ſyſtem of climates account for the ſtate of the arts in Naples, in Magna Grecia, and in the iſland of Sicily, a great part of which lies under the very latitude of Athens, and is much more fertile in its ſoil? Does not every body know that the Neapolitan ſchool, though ſufficiently numerous, has never produced one great man*. Calabreſi, Giordano, and Solimeni, were

* Abbé Wincleman ſeems either not to have known, or not recollected, the inferior character of the Neapolitan and Sicilian artiſts, when he wrote his elogium upon the happy temperament of their imagination and capacity. See Hiſtoire de l'Art, page 48.

artiſts

artiſts but of the third or fourth rate. I could aſk a good many queſtions of this ſort, nay, even other queſtions offer themſelves. What is the difference between the climates of Algiers and Tunis, and that of Carthage, which was formerly the ſeat of one of the oldeſt republics on the records of hiſtory? is the difference of climate equal to the difference of manners, &c. The latitutes and climates of Athens, Sparta, Carthage, Rome, and Madrid being given, what difference of government, manners, and ingenuity ought it to produce, according to the ſyſtem of climates; and how would this agree with the accounts that hiſtories have given of what they have actually produced, eſpecially if the moral cauſes, that have operated in thoſe countries, are themſelves the effects of phyſical cauſes, as Du Bos would inſinuate*? But theſe matters I ſhall leave to others.

* Vol. ii. ch. 13.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

The Error of the Notion about the Influence of Climates exemplified by an Analyſis of the different Styles of Art.

WHEN we come to analyze the taſte and practice of painting in the different countries, nothing can be more evident than the inſignificance and little utility of all notions about the influence of climate; they explain nothing. If many Flemings and Hollanders are in the extreme of a cold, vulgar attention to mere ordinary truth, there are alſo thoſe who are as wild and as extravagant to the extreme of madneſs, ſuch as Spranger, Goltzius, and many others. You can find every where, north and ſouth, cold ſpiritleſs works without fancy, and attentive only to vulgar truth; and you may find alſo in the ſame place thoſe that are wild and rhapſodical, and as full of fire and frenzy,

frenzy, as they are deficient in fidelity and nature. Knowledge and judgment would be the corrective of both theſe extremes; and will any one ſay that the acquiſition of knowledge and comparative judgment have any thing to do with the climates of England, France, Italy, &c.

Ancient hiſtories inform us that the arts originated from Egypt and Aſſyria. The great cities of Memphis, Thebes, Nineveh, and Babylon, were the theatres of art and genius about four thouſand years ago. Near ſeventeen hundred years after, they ſhone out in Greece; in the time of Pericles: and about one thouſand nine hundred years after this, they ſhed a luſtre in Italy, on the pontificates of Julius II. and Leo X. As each of theſe luminous periods makes but one ſmall point of time in an immenſe tract of ages; it is very fortunate for the climates of Aſſyria and Egypt, that hiſtory has accidentally preſerved the memory of thoſe cultivated

periods, or it is a thouſand to one but ſome of our philoſophers would, from the preſent unfavourable aſpect of things in thoſe countries, deduce ſuch a malign influence of climate, as would be incompatible with any genius for the arts.

Nay, even as it is, our faith in the influence of climates receives a great ſhock when we reflect upon the taſte and character of the Egyptian genius, it is diametrically oppoſite to what it ought to be; it is maſſive, rude, and has more of geometry and heavy propriety, than it has of that light, elegant ſpirit and rich luxuriance of imagination, that, according to our philoſophers, ſuch a warm climate ought to have produced. On the other hand, modern Gothic building, which received its perfection in the North, is in the other extreme, of a flimſy lightneſs, and ſeems to be produced by the riot of an overheated wild fancy, without the leaſt degree of the ſuppoſed cool, heavy, northern judgment.

Theſe phenomena, which militate ſo greatly with the ſyſtem of the influence of climates, are eaſily accounted for, when we attend to the nature and progreſs of the arts. When the remaining corruptions and veſtiges of a prior ſtate of arts is out of the queſtion, all beginnings are rude, and ſhort of the mark aimed at; they are unwrought, and have in all climates more of the block than of the ſtatue in them. The Greeks came after the Aſiatics and Egyptians, and took up the arts at the point where the others left off; they had not to invent and to diſcover, but to improve and perfect; their genius was employed in finiſhing that bozzo of all the arts, which the genius of the others had produced.

I have mentioned that Gothic architecture received its perfection on this ſide of the Alps; it is neceſſary to be a little particular on the ſubject. The manner of building called Gothic, is vulgarly ſuppoſed to have been the invention of

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the Goths, and that it was carried into Italy by thoſe barbarians, after they had eſtabliſhed themſelves upon the ruins of the Roman empire: but the contrary was the fact; it had its birth in Italy, and it croſſed the Alps, in company with all the other declining arts, which were happily preſerved by the friars and other religious, and which they tranſplanted into the Gothic kingdoms. There are no proofs that the northern people had any ſpecies of architecture at all, before their intercourſe with the Romans, or that their habitations were other than holes in the earth, or at beſt built of wood, mud, and chaff, as is ſtill practiſed in ſome parts of our iſlands.

The beginnings of Gothic architecture are traceable in thoſe buildings erected in Italy before the arts were much declined, and long before the Goths had any footing there. The buildings erected between the times of Auguſtus and Adrian, are as remarkable for a rigid, chaſte, and manly

plainneſs, as they are for elegance and beauty: the diſtinct characteriſtics of the three Grecian orders, employed in the buildings of this period, are preſerved in great purity; and the Roman or compound order, uſed in the arch of Titus, was ingeniouſly enough conſtructed, and happily united, with ſufficient ſimplicity, the ornaments of the two Greek orders from whence it was taken. But there is diſcoverable in the buildings erected after Alexander Severus, a too great fondneſs for ornament and a deſire of novelty, and compounding the parts of architecture with a ſtill greater degree of complexity; which increaſing every day in proportion to the growth of effeminacy and decay of knowledge, every new effort at invention brought them but the nearer to barbariſm.

The confuſions and unſettled ſtate of the empire greatly contributed to facilitate this decay and this vicious corruption; thirty emperors, in about ſixty years,

years, produced a rapid decline in the arts from Severus to Dioclesian; things grew worse from him to Constantine and to Valentinian, when all the arts, and all memory of the sound principles of architecture seem to have been so completely worn out and obliterated, that when, about a century after, Theodoric the Goth employed the people of Italy in restoring their old buildings (which were ruined in this interval) and in erecting new ones at Rome, Ravenna, and other places of Romania, they were consequently built in the taste that was then in being, and which had been, as was observed before, for near three centuries growing up to the detestable crisis at which it had now arrived. Hence this taste of Italian architecture obtained the name of Gothic from this Gothic king, who, during a peaceful reign of thirty-three years, gave the Italians time to breathe, and to amuse him and themselves, by exercising the little ingenuity that re-

mained amongſt them in this their declined ſtate, and after the preceding ravages and devaſtations of Alaric, Genſeric, and Odoacer. Theſe buildings, as they were rich, ornamented, and extremely unlike any thing heatheniſh, were copied and imitated, and became the models of ſubſequent Chriſtian churches. The ſame declenſion and depravity was going on at Conſtantinople, and in other parts of the eaſtern empire, though not in the ſame degree nor ſo rapidly, as it appears that the Greeks, in the eleventh and twelfth century, had ſome little knowledge of the arts remaining with them, and gave a ſort of beginning, in Italy, to the reſtoration of architecture, ſculpture, and painting.

I ſhall here point out a few of thoſe corruptions, as they grew one out of the other, by which architecture was inſenſibly led from the Grecian to the Gothic taſte; and I could have wiſhed, had my time permitted, to have given drawings of them,

them, which would have made the matter evident to the moſt common obſerver. In the ſecond arcade, of the ſecond floor of the amphitheatre of Titus, there is the ſame kind of roof as that in the baths of Dioclesian: the nature of thoſe arcades, in the amphitheatre, made it neceſſary to uſe this kind of arched roof, meeting in a point in the center of four pillars, as the arcades croſs one another. The neceſſity there was for paſſing from one arcade to the other, and for preſenting the eye, in all ſituations, with ſuch a portion of the building as to preſerve an idea of the whole together, made this manner of arching neceſſary and proper; and the ſhortneſs and ſolidity of the pillars, which ſuſtain the arches, and the juſt proportion they bear to the voids between, gives a happy ſatisfaction to the eye. There are alſo in Adrian's Villa, at Tivoli, a number of the chambers which are ſquare, and in ſome of which there is the ſame ſort of roof, where the four

ſides of the vault, meeting in a common point in the center of the roof, each ſide gives to the eye exactly the appearance of the Gothic pointed arch, although they are in reality made up of two half circles croſſing each other.

The corruption and caricatura of this manner of arching, by only raiſing the points of centre, as in the church of the Minerva, &c. gives exactly the Gothic roof; and when we add to it the great number of breaks and projectures, introduced by the corruption of the other parts, owing greatly to the change in the ground plan, from a ſimple round or ſquare figure, to the more complex one of the Greek or Latin croſs, with the multiplied ornaments and breaks in the angles, it completes the metamorphoſis. There are at the dome of Virterbo and at St, Mark's, Venice, ranges of columns, from which regular arches, of half a circle, interſect one another, by being made to ſpring from every third column, which gives a Gothic

arch

arch between every two; this confuſion is augmented by the idea of the croſs, which is ridiculouſly kept up every where; the apertures over the ſolids or columns conſiſting of a croſs of four circles, and the ſame idea is attended to in the arch itſelf, where the cobweb-work that is ſuſpended from it is meant for half a croſs. The ſupporting of arches by ſingle columns (and not with a pillar, half column, and impoſts, as was the ancient practice) had its riſe even before the time of Conſtantine and Valentinian, but then it was univerſally practiſed. See examples of this in the churches of St. Stephano Rotunda, St. Agneſi, St. Paoli, &c. The intercollumnation, or the ſpaces between the columns, came alſo about the ſame time to be widened out of all rule.

Before the great nich, which has been cut through the attic of the Pantheon, there are two colmns which are remarkable, as the flutes are more than the diameter

meter of a circle deep, and the fillets have the extra ornaments of half a circle; there is alſo, under and over theſe fillets, a leaf which touches the annulet at top and bottom; but theſe columns and their pillaſters are certainly the work of a different age. This outrayed a little by ſinking the flutes deeper and leſſening their number, of which there are examples, lead to the Gothic bundle of columns. In the church of S. Lorenzo, built by Conſtantine, there are columns with flutes and fillets like thoſe of the Pantheon, but they are twiſted round the ſhaft; the tranſition from this to the twiſting of the ſhaft itſelf into the ſpiral form, was eaſy and followed of courſe; and I am very certain, from various examples of this to be found in St. John Lateran, and other places of Rome, that the column preſerved in St. Peter's, and ſaid to be brought from Jeruſalem, did never belong, as is pretended, to any temple of Solo-

Solomon; and Rafaelle ſhould not have placed it in his cartoon of the miracle at the beautiful gate of the temple; it was evidently either wrought at Rome, or in Greece, or at Jeruſalem, in times poſterior to the deſtruction of the temple, and when the arts were much corrupted and declined. There are at S. Mark's, Venice, four columns, two of which are of Oriental alabaſter, in good proportion, (as to the height and diameter of the ſhaft) in which the flutes and fillets twiſt round the ſhaft in the ſpiral manner; the fillets are half-round and but ſeven in number, ſo that they are very large in proportion to the diameter of the whole ſhaft, and being ſo few, by only perforating the flutes, it gives you the exact bundle of little twiſted columns which you ſee at John Lateran, at Rome.

The Corinthian order, particularly in its capital, has been more tampered with than any other; there are ſome weak examples of this amongſt the ancients them-

themſelves, even before the arts were much fallen, and many of theſe have been followed as precedents by ſilly pretenders to invention ever ſince. In the place of the volutes they have put cornucopias, for a temple of Ceres; eagles, for Jupiter; and horſes, for Mars: others have been conſtructed with arms, &c. in the way of trophies. The Chriſtian artiſts likewiſe have, in the lower ages, introduced matter of their own, ſuch as croſſes, holy lambs, doves, &c. yet the Corinthian capital is, for the moſt part, ſtill traceable in what they have done. St. Mark's palace is a great repoſitory of theſe corruptions; the ſcrolls of many of the capitals are made of clumps of leaves, turned up, turned down, pine-apples, and in ſome the real ſcrolls are uſed both at the angles and in the center; in others, where the central ſcrolls ſhould come, they have indiſcrimmately placed lions heads, maſks, half figures, &c. others have pigeons and rams, with their feet coming down upon the

the firſt tier of leaves, and the leaves are ſometimes turned backwards, as if they were blown by the wind. Some capitals are inclining more to the Ionic, with a heavy cima over the ſcrolls, fantaſtically ornamented. The ſame is to be ſeen at Bolſena, Sienna, and other places, where the bell of the capital is ſometimes covered with a ſort of baſket-work of true-lovers knots, the ends of which form the ſcrolls at the angles. In the lower order of the columns at St. Mark's, the capitals have eight faces, in the center of each face are placed, over a tier of leaves, half figures fiddling, &c. and there is the greateſt imaginable confuſion in theſe capitals when four three-quarter columns are projected from the angles of a ſquare pillar.

The two immenſe granite columns, which ſtand near the water at St. Mark's, and were, it is ſaid, brought from Conſtantinople, are in good proportion as to the ſhaft, although the two little mem-

members, at top and bottom, are badly wrought; there is on them a capital and cornice of white marble, the capital conſiſts of the bell of the Corinthian, but it is ſquare at the top, in order to leave four flat ſpaces for the figure of a croſs, which they have cut on it like two thigh bones laid one over the other, where the central caulicoli ſhould come; they have alſo retained four of the leaves, which cover the deformity of the angular parts, where the round and ſquare forms of this capital are jumbled together. The cornice is a confuſion of three cavettos, mounted one over the other, ſeparated by a liſtel, and ſix rows of dentilli.

In the old churches of St. Genevieve and St. Germain de Prez, at Paris, the capitals, though very much corrupted, are ſtill Corinthian; all the diviſions ſtill remain, the abacus, the bell of the capital, the ſcrolls upon the angles, and the aſtragal ſeparating it from the ſhaft, all is traceable, though very deform and diſ-

pro-

proportionate. The baſes alſo, are a torus and an anulet, or two toruſes and a ſcocia, &c. However, this architecture was, towards the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, very much improved in England, France, and other places on this ſide of the Alps; and although I am not inclined to make its elogium, yet I will confeſs that it is not without a kind of merit of its own.

I ſhall cloſe this diſcuſſion with one remark upon the various taſtes of architecture. The differences between Grecian architecture and that of China, Egypt, Perſia, and the Gothic, appears to conſiſt in the ornamental parts. They have all the eſſentials of neceſſity in common, the fulcrums are perpendicular, and there is ſomething at top and bottom reſembling capital and baſe: in order to prevent the weight of the buildings from ſinking the trunk of the tree or fulcrum into the ground; they have

uſed

uſed a broad ſtone, or ſtep, and continued range of plinth; and that it may not rot at top, they have put on an abacus, or tile, to carry off the water clear of the fulcrum; and the covering or roofs are pointed or raiſed in the middle, in order to prevent any lodgments of ſnow, rain, &c. that might annoy the building. The ſimple nature of the thing, common uſe, and a few years experience, would teach thus much. The Indian hovel, and the Grecian temple, have this in common. But men will add ornaments for magnificence and beauty; and the great difference between the Grecian ornaments and all others is, that the Grecian taſte for embeliſhing grew up amongſt them whilſt they were cultivating all the ſciences, and when the arts of deſign were in perfection. Their philoſophy, eloquence, poetry, painting, ſcupture, muſic, &c. made one maſs of education, and reflected light and improvement upon

each other. The graces were the produce of this joint effort; and architecture, which has not any archetype in nature to direct and govern its embelliſhments, became ornamented by emanations from that ſtock of deſign and order, which reſulted from the united exerciſe and knowledge of thoſe arts that had: and, like another Pandora, the Grecian architecture was decorated with gifts from the gods.

Thus the genius of the climates on this ſide of the Alps, is not chargeable with the baſeneſs of the Gothic taſte of architecture; to ſpeak in the language of our philoſophers, it muſt be placed to the account of the influence of the climate of Italy. The ſame climate had alſo, about three centuries paſt, another influence of a happier nature, when it put forth Palladio, M. Angelo, Sanſovino, Bramante, Rafaelle, Guilio Romano, Vignola, San Michelli, Peruzzi, and the other great reſtorers of good taſte in

architecture. And to carry this philoſophical notion to its climax, there has been, for more than one hundred years ſince, another influence that ſhewed itſelf in Borromini, who was the father of the preſent taſte, which is entirely different from all the reſt, and is more barbarous and fantaſtic than the moſt depraved Gothic.

Surely it muſt be evident groſs nonſenſe to ſuppoſe all theſe different kinds of taſte to be owing to the influence of climate; and if you ſuppoſe one, you muſt admit all. The climate of the country, which is ſtable and durable if any thing is ſo, is by this means ridiculouſly converted into a giddy harlequin, who is more changeable than the moon. Away then with ſuch abſurdities, they but darken the road of enquiry: let us hear what the hiſtorian has recorded, and old Vaſari will inform us that Gio. Maria Falconetto, a Veroneſe,

had been ſtudying architecture at Rome, and had drawn and meaſured all the antiquities, both there and at Naples, and that he carried this taſte of architecture into the Venetian ſtate a little before Palladio's time.

CHAP. XVII.

The State of Education furniſhes the Solution of all thoſe Difficulties which many Writers have found ſo perplexing.

THUS the good taſte of architecture which was a long time gradually reviving at Rome and Florence, was exported, in full body and maturity, to the Venetian territories; and it was in either the one or the other of theſe ways, by the progreſs of education and by the ſtudies, proper or improper, which corrupt or advance art, that all the changes and tranſitions of taſte, good and bad, have been brought about in all ages: and ſo far as you can purſue this knowledge of the ſtate of education and its changes, ſo far you can account for the taſte of a nation, and for its variations, without troubling yourſelf with oſtentatious diſquiſitions about the climate or ſoil.

This

This knowledge ſpeedily diſſolves all thoſe difficulties which Du Bos and other writers have found ſo very knotty. The general ſtate of education gives the reaſon why great men are almoſt always cotemporary. Why many ages have produced nothing, and why thoſe times which are fertile of eminent men, abound likewiſe with ſuch as are capable of doing juſtice to their merit, as they all drink at the ſame common fountain of education. It will account alſo why the encouragement of Auguſtus and two Mecenaſes * could have produced nothing in the time of Conſtantine, as this maſs of education was corrupted and worthleſs, and alſo why Julius II. and Leo X. if they had reigned in Sweden would throw away their munificence to no purpoſe, upon the natives of a country, who were unprepared for the perfection of the arts, and who had either an improper education, a bad one, or none at all.

* Du Bos, vol. ii. ch. 13.

Upon theſe imaginary difficulties abbé Du Bos has laid out a great deal of ill-placed learning and ill-digeſted reflections upon climates, ages, and good or bad years, which he philoſophically diſtinguiſhes into mental leanneſs and fatneſs, like Pharoah's kine. As to what he obſerves about plants, corn, the blood, and ſuch like, it may be true or falſe, but it is little to the purpoſe, and is extremely liable to miſtaken viſionary concluſions: in truth, I ſee no connection between the perfections of a man and that of a bunch of grapes; and if the fertility and excellence of the ſoil was to determine any thing about the merit and valuable qualities of the human mind, the comparatively barren region of Attica would not have ſtood foremoſt in the hiſtory of mankind.

CHAP. XVIII.

The ſame Subject continued.

THE preſident Monteſquieu has in ſome inſtances unfortunately followed his ingenious countryman Du Bos, in the ſame miſtaken precipitate track of calculating genius. "As climates are diſtinguiſhed (ſays he) by degrees of latitude, we might diſtinguiſh them alſo in ſome meaſure by degrees of ſenſibility." And he proves it by the following inſtance. "I have ſeen the operas of England and of Italy; they are the ſame pieces, and the ſame performers; and yet the ſame muſic produces ſuch different effects on the two nations: one is ſo cold and indifferent, the other ſo tranſported, that it ſeems almoſt inconceiveable †." I ſhall notwithſtanding venture to ſay, that theſe different effects

† Spirit of Laws, book xiv. ch. 2.

are eaſily conceivable when we chuſe to reflect upon the mutability, growth, decline, and different materials of temporary national education. Is not the national taſte for muſic, like the taſte for all the other arts, conſtantly, though imperceptibly, changing? Is it not evident that in Italy, France, and England, the different ages have had very different feelings about them? and are there not many very conſiderable Italians who, ſo far from approving of their preſent taſte of muſic, have lamented its want of meaning and true expreſſion, its degeneracy and change. But I ſhall leave this matter for doctor Burney and the gentlemen who underſtand muſic, as it is fully ſufficient for my purpoſe that changes have been admitted, and that the taſte for this art, like that for all the others, depends upon the maſs of education, and fluctuates accordingly.

In

In book xix. ch. 27. of the Spirit of Laws, it is obſerved, as a neceſſary conſequence of their ſituation and mode of government, "that the ſatirical writings of the Engliſh are ſharp and ſevere; and we find amongſt them many Juvenals, without diſcovering one Horace"—— "Their poets have more frequently an original rudeneſs of invention, than that particular kind of delicacy which ſprings from taſte; we there find ſomething which approaches nearer to the bold ſtrength of M. Angelo, than to the ſofter graces of a Rafaelle." Theſe inſtances from the Roman writers are a little unlucky, and foreign to the purpoſe for which they were brought: as the delicate Horace was bred up in the conteſts of a republic, as well as the harſh and ſharp Lucilius; and the ſevere, furious Juvenal lived in the times of ſlavery. As to our ſatiriſts, it is hard to ſay how many of them Monteſquieu had read, or whether he read any of them, or how far

far he was maſter of their language, ſo as to be able to form a proper judgment of their ſtyle and manner. But abbé Wincleman, who has alſo paſſed a magiſterial cenſure upon all the Engliſh poets, was, to my own knowledge of him, ſo little acquainted with the language they wrote in, that he was ſcarcely able to underſtand even an ordinary article of intelligence in one of our Gazettes. But as Monteſquieu was indeed a very different kind of writer, ſuppoſe we admit for the preſent, that he was alſo above prejudice, and had not, like the other, any ſyſtem to maintain that was incompatible with the truth; that he did underſtand our language; and that, before he formed this judgment, he had given at leaſt our beſt ſatiriſts a fair and diſpaſſionate peruſal. Yet what are we to think, if, after all, he could not find in Pope's Satires, and in his Rape of the Lock, any thing of the Horatian neatneſs and delicacy, which all the reſt

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of the world have found there; that in Addiſon he could ſee nothing at all of a gentlemanly turn of humour; and that Swift appeared to him to be a blunt, direct, angry writer, who never furniſhed any exerciſe to the riſible muſcles, and who was unſkilled in the uſe of wit and irony.

As to what he ſays in his 14th book, "that the climate of England is ſo diſtempered as to give the natives a diſreliſh to every thing, nay even of life; and that the Engliſh deſtroy themſelves moſt unaccountably often in the very boſom of happineſs," &c. it is an obſervation every way unworthy ſuch a writer as Monteſquieu. At leaſt in this particular he might have informed himſelf better, as the knowledge of it did not depend upon any nice diſcernment of our language, as in the former inſtance. But ſometimes theſe eagles of philoſophy will ſoar ſo high, that they ſee nothing but clouds. A more ordinary

nary man would have found out, nay had it been in the iſlands of Borneo, or Madagaſcar, Monteſquieu would have found, that this hateful practice of ſuicide was brought about by a combination of moral cauſes; that it was of very recent introduction, and that the natives formerly were not particularly remarkable for this moroſeneſs of diſpoſition, and this tedium vitæ.

When we conſider the compound nature of man, neither a merely ſenſitive being, nor yet a merely intellectual, or moral one, it will afford no ſmall entertainment to let our thoughts wander over the various ways that the different religions of the Greeks, Romans, and the Italians, were calculated to act upon, and to occupy all the ſenſes and the imagination, as well as the underſtanding of the people: even the ancient Jewiſh religion was not ill conſtructed for this, by its pompous and magnificent feaſts, its muſic, its ſacrifices, its numerous ceremonies,

nies, and their conſtant frequency. The ancients ſeem to have grounded themſelves upon a perſuaſion that all this external of things, this allegria, feaſting, and occupation of the ſenſes, was indiſpenſibly neceſſary for the bulk of mankind, whoſe ſituations in life utterly diſqualified them for philoſophy, ſubtle calculations, and deductions from the fitneſs of things; and who could be but little affected, and that but for a very ſhort time, by any ſet of abſtract, naked, ſpeculative opinions, rigidly diveſted of all outſide pomps and vanities of this world; and which, by deſpiſing the toys and puppet-ſhew work of ſuperſtition and weakneſs, would leave nothing to amuſe the weak and ignorant, who are very numerous, and are not always confined to the lower claſs. Their religions were accordingly conſtructed in ſuch a manner, as to afford a ſort of general purſuit and ſource of occupation and entertainment, which grew up with

every man at the ſame time that he was purſuing his particular avocation in life; and thoſe who were baffled and diſappointed in theſe particular purſuits, found an aſylum and reſource in recurring to the matter with which religion was amply ſtored, and with which he could fill up the gulph and vacuity of his mind thus ſickened and forſaken by its other proſpects.

Some countries, from commerce and the form of government, are remarkably diſtinguiſhed for great private wealth, and its concomitants eaſe and luxury. In ſuch countries Socrates, Lycurgus, and St. Paul, may agree to decry ſuch a ſummum bonum, and to ſtigmatize it as the ſource of the deepeſt evil, but they will have little weight (even where their opinions might reach) with the inveterate habits of men, every part of whoſe education has tended to amplify and to over-rate thoſe objects; and who, like fooliſh ſportſmen, build their happineſs

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upon the capture, which is uncertain and liable to diſappointment, and not in the chace, of which they could not be deprived. I have neither inclination nor ability to declaim upon the threadbare topics of the world, or the fleſh, of Mammon, or Belial; and if I had, it were better ſpared, as theſe points have been long ſince excellently laboured, both by philoſophy and religion: but I will ſay, that in a great kingdom, where the human paſſions are all afloat, and where property is from the conſtitution of that kingdom remarkably fluctuating, and almoſt like a game of chance; and where the conflict of many different modes of religion had mutually ruined the credit of each other, and, generally ſpeaking, left nothing remaining but a great chaſm of doubt and diſbelief; it will be hard to find in ſuch a kingdom a remedy and a balſam for the diſguſts of an impotent ſated voluptuary, for the diſappointment of baffled ambition, pride, avarice, and

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of all the other purſuits, where the hopes of multitudes of men finiſh in diſappointment, ruin, and chagrin. There is then no general ſtay left, no haven where this wreck can ſhelter itſelf; the very nature and activity of his purſuits, and the paſſions employed in them, has kept him a ſtranger to real ſociability, to affectionate hearty friendſhips, and to every thing that could now be of uſe; he can diſburthen himſelf no where; he ſeeks ſolitude, and he has no fears before him to hinder his taking a leap in the dark. Theſe things, as Dr. Young obſerves, might have happened in any climate, even in Eden:

A ſenſual, unreflecting life, is big
With monſtrous births, and *Suicide*, to crown
The black infernal brood.

Complaint, Night V.

As to low ſpirits, and what the French call *ennui*, as people educate themſelves into it, ſo, if they do not ſuffer it to go too far, they may educate themſelves out

of

of it again, of which I have known inſtances. Some men, as was obſerved before, are brought to this temperature of mind, by indulging themſelves in melancholy, upon their loſſes and diſappointments in matters of uncertain tenure, and which they have unwiſely over-rated. Others, ſtrange as it may ſeem, only affect it in the beginning; and, as is often the caſe in love and in other things, habit is ſure to convert it afterwards into a reality. Now there are two infallible remedies that might be preſcribed in this diſorder, one of them indeed is to be taken rather by way of preventive, and conſiſts in ſetting about the acquiring of good humour and high ſpirits; and the method to be purſued is laid down in lord Bacon, page 74. "Practiſe them (good humour and high ſpirits) chiefly at two ſeveral times: the one when the mind is beſt diſpoſed; the other when it is worſt diſpoſed: that by the one you may gain a great ſtep, by the other you

may work out the knots and ſtondes of the mind, and make the middle times the more eaſy and pleaſant." As for the other method of removing the ſpleen, when it has actually taken place, it has been practiſed with ſalutary good effect upon the Yahoos, and is laid down in Gulliver, who, from certain parities, which he has well diſcovered, recommends it ſtrenuouſly to an Engliſh conſtitution, and pledges himſelf for the ſucceſs of its application.

I hope it is not neceſſary to inſiſt, that an over-attention to ſenſual and worldly qualifications, and an unfeeling indifference to the objects of religion and morality, cannot be the natural conſequence of living in any one climate more than in another; certainly not. The human paſſions, which are the ſeeds of diverſity, and the inſtruments of good and evil, receive no character from nature but that of ſtrength or weakneſs. A man with weak paſſions will never be either very excellent,

excellent, or very vicious: but when the paſſions are ſtrong and impetuous, then it is that they touch the extremes of heaven, or hell, with their virtues or their vices, according to which ever goal their habits and their education drive them. Thus it is that a man is accountable for his actions; a father for his children; and the ſtate for its members. Timely habits and proper education might convert ſenſibility into humanity, pride into greatneſs of ſoul, and curioſity into a knowledge of ſublime truths.

The hiſtories of England, Greece, Italy, and France, furniſh many inſtances of great changes and revolutions in politics, religion, and morality. There can be no doubt but that Epicuriſm, Stoiciſm, Pyrrhoniſm, or true or falſe Chriſtianity, might be planted ſucceſsfully in any of theſe ſoils; they are equally capable of the extremes of ſuperſtition and impiety, and conſequently of filling up all the mediate ſpaces between them; they are

alike ſuſceptible of every mode of government, of ariſtocracy, democracy, or monarchy. There are periods in which each country has ſhewn virtue to be admired and imitated; and there are others which ſhock us with their vices and corruptions: they have had their ages of equal laws, of anarchy, tyranny, luxury, piety, and impiety. The Greeks and Aſiatics were eager to make images in one age, and they were as zealous to break them in another; they had their ages of iconoclaſtes and iconopoi, they had their times when, like the Engliſh, they thought it unlawful to paint any thing but birds, landſcapes, and other ſtill-life ſubjects *; and there were other, happier times, when the ſame people looked with a becoming contempt on ſuch unworthy purſuits, and when all the dignity of genius was employed upon thoſe nobler objects of the human character and the paſ-

* Maimbourg's Hiſtory of the Iconoclaſtes.

ſions;

ſions; the very veſtiges of which are at this day the admiration of all enlightened people. The people of England have been at one period ambitious of filling up a long calendar of ſaints, at another they were as buſily employed in blotting them out. At one time they are ſlaviſh enough to hold their kingdom in vaſſalage to the pope; at another they laugh at his authority, and ſpit back interdicts and excommunications in his face.

CHAP. XIX.

Some Obſervations on Religion, ſo far as it is connected with the mental Powers.

LORD Shafteſbury has ſaid, that every one is a virtuoſo of a higher or lower degree; and it may be as truly obſerved, that there is naturally every where a religion, which is either affirmative or negative, contracted or extended, and which enters deeply in forming the peculiar habits and character of the people. Where religion is affirmative and extended, it gives a looſe and enthuſiaſm to the fancy, which throws a ſpirit into the air and manners, and ſtamps a diverſity, life, quickneſs, ſenſibility, and expreſſive ſignificance over every thing they do. In another place, religion is more negative and contracted; being formed in direct oppoſition to the firſt, its meaſures were regulated accordingly; much pains were taken to root out and to remove every thing that might give

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wing to the imagination, and ſo to regulate the outward man by a torpid, inanimate compoſure, gravity, and indifference, that it may attend to nothing but the mere acts of neceſſity, every thing elſe being reputed idle and vain: they have had as few word as buttons, the tongue ſpoke almoſt without moving the lips, and the circumſtances of a murder were related with as little emotion as an ordinary mercantile tranſaction. Hence one great difference between many of our people and the Italians and French; hence the difference between the Turkiſh and Chriſtian inhabitants of Greece; and hence alſo the ſtriking difference between the Jewiſh and Chriſtian natives of Rome. For notwithſtanding the Jews are at preſent, perhaps, the oldeſt inhabitants of Rome, and the leaſt mixed with the northern people, yet they were never diſtinguiſhable (ſince their ſettlement there in the time of Titus) for any of thoſe powers of imagination and ele-

gant purſuits, with which the climate of Rome has been ſuppoſed to inſpire its natives.

Some kinds of religon appear to be the grave of arts, of genius, of ſenſiblity, and of all the finer and ſpiritual parts of the human faculties: other religions have been the nurſe and mother of them; they have embraced all the arts, poetry, painting, muſic, architecture, and every effort of ingenuity was employed in giving a force and furtherance to their views. Theſe arts improved and grew perfect by this continued exertion; and the hiſtories of paſt ages, and our experience of the common feelings of human nature, give ſufficient teſtimony of the importance of this perfection of the arts to the character of a nation, by the admiration and glory that has ever followed it. Let no one tell me, that theſe arts are dangerous to weak minds; that they are liable to be employed to bad and vicious purpoſes; it is a fooliſh objection,

jection, and holds equally againſt every thing that man can lay his hands on: there is no art that ought to be judged from its perverſions; we are not to deprive ourſelves of the benefits of alphabetic writing becauſe Pyrrho, Epicurus, Lucretius, Spinoſa, Hobbes, Mandeville, Bolingbroke, Voltaire, and numbers of others have made a pernicious uſe of it. The demands of religion alone afforded the artiſts of Greece and Italy a great and ſufficient opportunity of improving art, up to ſuch a ſtate of perfection, elegance, and utility, that it came at laſt to be ſought for by people of condition and knowledge, merely on account of this elegance and perfection, and independent of all religious conſiderations. So that, although art in its ſtate of maturity and perfection had charms ſufficient to recommend itſelf, yet it ought to be always remembered that this perfection and maturity aroſe entirely from the religious neceſſity there

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was in thoſe countries for it; and indeed, when every thing is duly conſidered, it could hardly ariſe from any thing elſe. If the ancient Greeks, notwithſtanding their climate, were of the ſame leaven with our original Quakers, or Puritans, or Mahometans, they would not only have been without an Apelles, or a Phidias, but (the connection of things conſidered) perhaps without poets, and without any thing that could be a proof that there was either genius or imagination amongſt them; and there would be leſs memorial of them remaining at this day, than poſterity will have of the Quakers: becauſe this kind of men exiſt in a time when other countries, and other parties of men in their own country, are enlightened by the arts, either directly, or reflected. Nay, even perhaps the greateſt part of the culture and learning of Europe at this day might (without any great ſtraining of fact) be derived from thoſe Greeks, and the nations, who

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were their predeceſſors in the arts, and and is by conſequence ultimately owing to the vital principles produced by the exertions of thoſe arts, without which even the Greeks, Egyptians, and Chaldeans lie at this day undiſtinguiſhed and confounded in the ſame maſs with other barbarians.

I ſhall leave it for others to inſiſt on the importance of theſe arts to the glory of a nation, their utility to religion, to morality, and to the poliſhing of ſocial life.

" Adde quod ingenuas didiciſſe fideliter artes
Emollit mores nec ſinit eſſe feros."

" Doctrina ſed vim promovet inſitam
Rectique cultus pectora roborant."

I ſhall only glance at their negative advantages, in offering us a variety of inoffenſive pleaſing amuſements, upon which a part of the luxuries and ſuperfluities of a great nation might be employed with leſs ruin to the public virtue, than in the gratification of thoſe paſſions and appertites

petites which diſgrace humanity, and of which we have but too many ſhocking examples. "Wealth in a ſtate is a nuiſance, a poiſonous ſource of vileneſs and wickedneſs, if it is not employed by public ſpirit and good taſte in promoting virtue, ingenuity, induſtry, and all the ſciences and arts, which employ men's nobleſt powers and faculties, and raiſe human ſociety to its moſt amiable glorious eſtate." Turnbul, 124.

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

The Concluſion.

FROM the whole of what has appeared in this enquiry, it is evident, that the riſe and perfection of the arts in Italy and Greece, was owing to the co-operation of thoſe cauſes which are called moral, as contradiſtinguiſhed to natural. And that theſe moral cauſes not concurring, was the true reaſon why the genius of the ancient Romans did not, to any degree, exert itſelf in the arts. We have ſeen that the introduction and perfection of the arts in France was owing to the concurrence of thoſe cauſes, and that this ſame concurrence of fortunate circumſtances was prevented taking effect in England at the ſame time, by reaſon of the accidental religious confuſions, and the change that was then brought about. We have alſo

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ſeen that many ages of Greece, Italy, and France, have appeared barren in mental abilities, when thoſe moral cauſes were wanting: and that the different taſtes of the ſeveral ages of art in the ſame country have ever reſulted from the different ways in which theſe moral cauſes have been combined, being either good, or bad; limited, or extended; pure or corrupt; according to the temporary modification of this maſs. We are then at no loſs for good and ſufficient reaſons why the people of England have been hitherto ſo very backward in the fine arts; and why the Greeks, the Italians, and the French, have been ſo much more ſucceſsful: the cauſes of it lie fairly before us; they are clear, indiſputable, and adequate facts, furniſhed by the hiſtories of thoſe countries and of thoſe arts; and would, had they been properly conſulted, have ſaved ingenious men the trouble and the ſhame of bewildering themſelves in the mazes of metaphyſics

and

and in abſtract, ſubtle, uncertain ſpeculations on climates and ſoils.

It has been ſhewn that the ſyſtem about the influence of climates was, from the extreme complication and fluctuation of things in temperate countries, a kind of knowledge impoſſible to be obtained: and that even when it was admitted in argument it has been found conſtantly at variance with facts, and to be as contradictory as it was nugatory and uncertain. We have ſeen alſo, by what our poets have done, that the Engliſh imagination and judgment, when permitted to exert themſelves, art at leaſt of ſuch good materials and fine contexture as to have no reaſon to ſhrink from a parallel with the beſt productions of our neighbours on the continent. This alone, if there was nothing elſe, is proof ſufficient that the climate of our iſlands has nothing hoſtile to genius: our climate is equally out of the queſtion, whether we ſhall be permitted

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and encouraged to employ this imagination and judgment in the arts of painting and ſculpture, ſo as to rival the great ages of Leo X. and Lewis XIV. or whether we have unfortunately taken up theſe arts at too late and corrupt a period of our manners, and are likely to remain where we are, for the moſt part miſpending our time on trifles and things of no exertion. I know very well that many of our artiſts have, in the leſſer branches, arrived at conſiderable excellence; I could name four or five landſcape-painters, the ſame or a greater number of portrait-painters, and I could point out a good many painters of hiſtory amongſt us, who, if they were properly and wiſely employed, would do honour to the country, It would be ſaying little to affirm that our artiſts have at preſent more abilities than thoſe of other countries; we can receive no honour by it, as the arts of Italy, France, and Flanders, have been long

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ſince decaying and corrupting, and are (generally ſpeaking) at preſent arrived at ſuch a criſis, that there is but little remaining of the vigorous ſound principles and good practice of former times. But it muſt be ſaid that theſe abilities of our people might be more nobly employed, upon great works and great ſubjects, which would put genius and knowledge to their utmoſt ſtretch; and if they were, they would (I am certain) meet with no obſtructions in the climate, which, if it was fairly examined, has as few natural diſadvantages as any under heaven; perhaps even fewer than Italy itſelf, for any man that has experienced the intenſe heats and ſirocco of that country, and has ſeen the laſſitude, ſleep, and idleneſs it produces in the natives, will have no doubt but that our ſummer is the more eligible of the two. Our inconveniencies ariſing from cold are not greater than their inconveniencies from the heat; but

we have no remarkable degree of cold: our winter, moderated by the warm ſea air, is much more tolerable than it is at Bologna, Parma, and other places, where the Apennines, to all the purpoſes of feeling, gives them a ſituation far north of our iſlands.

As to our changeable weather, rainy weather, north-eaſt or any other winds, their effects (if they have any) are not worth attending to; we ſhall leave them for the amuſement of idleneſs and affectation, of gamblers and other diſſipated unhappy people, who have often great occaſion for ſomething to find fault with. Man was made to act, and our enquiry is of climates as they are formed for action, and not for idleneſs. In England we can work without doors in the winter, and the ſummer ſun never unfits us for action, or drives us to ſeek the ſhade. There is then no country in which labour of mind or body is leſs in-

terrupted by the extremes of heat or cold; and let it be always remembered, that it is from the vigorous, continued, and ſucceſſional exertions of this mental and bodily labour, that every thing is to receive its perfection.

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